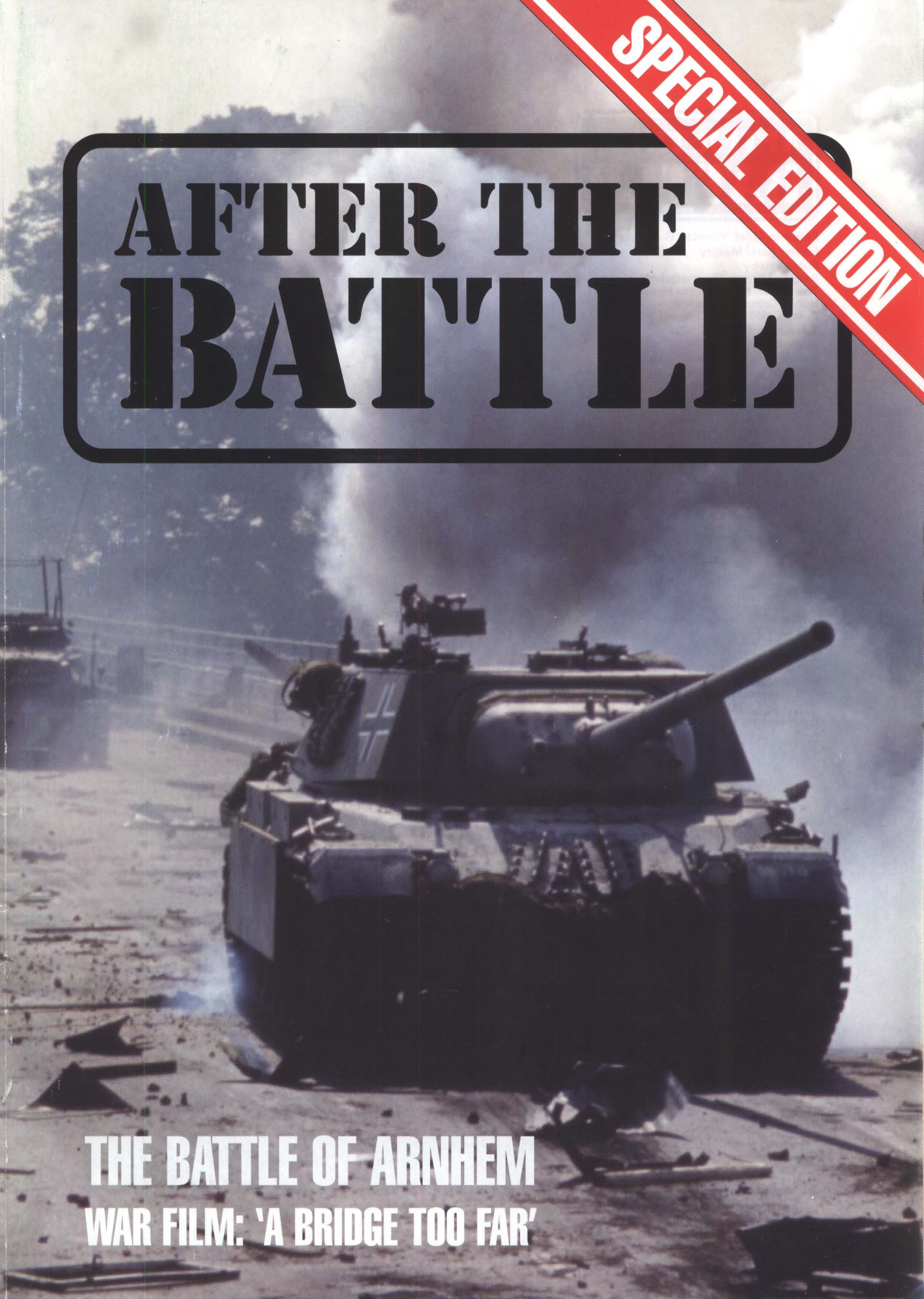
SPECIAL EDITION

AFTER THE BATTLE



THE BATTLE OF ARNHEM

WAR FILM: 'A BRIDGE TOO FAR'

AFTER THE BATTLE

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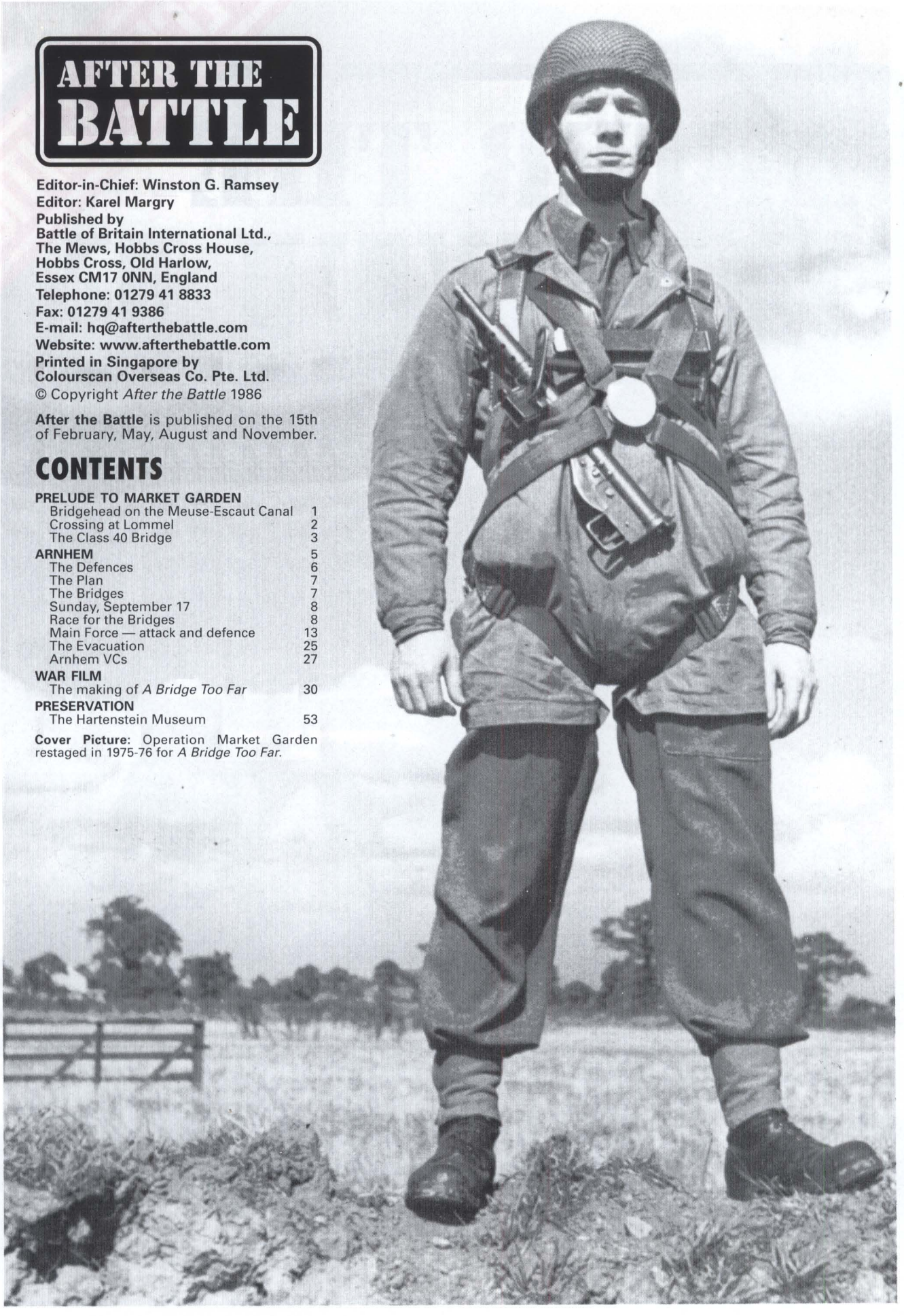
Cover Picture: Operation Market Garden restaged in 1975-76 for *A Bridge Too Far*.



PRELUDE TO MARKET GARDEN

Bridgehead on the Meuse-Escaut Canal

Top: **Infantry of 231 Brigade, 50th Division, cross the German engineers' bridge, renamed 'Joe's Bridge' at De Groote Barrier over the Meuse-Escaut canal photographed by Sergeant Midgley (IWM).** *Above:* **Joe's Bridge of 1949-50.**

In September 1944, the Meuse-Escaut canal in Belgium, two miles from the Dutch frontier, formed a major water obstacle on the road to Eindhoven. A bridgehead across the canal was vital for the historic advance northward of XXX Corps and, in particular, the Guards Armoured Division spearheaded by the Irish Guards. It was only fitting, therefore, that the Irish Guards commander himself should have ensured a bridgehead for Operation 'Market Garden' — the projected 60-mile thrust over the Rhine across bridges seized by airborne forces — when he captured the De Groote Barrier bridge intact.

As darkness fell on September 10, 1944, the Irish Guards Group (almost a family affair, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel J. O. E. Vanderleur of the infantry battalion with the armoured battalion led by a cousin of his, Lieutenant-Colonel G. A. D. Vanderleur) were four miles south of the De Groote Barrier bridge. At a hurried meeting, 'Colonel Joe' announced that, 'I am going to charge the bridge with a troop of tanks' and, turning to Captain R. D. Hutton, troop leader in 615 Field Squadron, Royal Engineers, he said, 'I want you to go with them and make sure the thing's safe.' When Captain Hutton explained that he had no knowledge of the bridge and no men, four weary guardsmen were promptly called over from the side of the road to assist!

'This only gave me four unknown men,' wrote Captain Hutton later, 'with my wireless operator, Davies, my Scots batman, Smith, and the driver of my half-track, an amusing and delightful cockney, Trendall, none of whom had the slightest idea about demolition technique — especially of the German variety. I split my men up into two parties, one of which, under Davies, was to cut all wires and any likely looking things they could find under the near end of the bridge, Smith and his two men were to do the same at the far end, I was to look for and destroy the electric circuit. The bridge, like all canal bridges, was very high and anyone crossing it would be silhouetted against the sky, whilst the approach road sloped steeply, making surprise very difficult.

'The plan was to cover the attack with fire from tanks to the west of a factory situated south-east of the bridge. The infantry were to work up as near as possible to the bridge on either side of the main road, whilst a troop of two tanks was to be concealed just off the road ready to rush the bridge, with the infantry following them. We, the sappers, were to run with the tanks as far as the bridge where our task began.

'The start of the attack was signalled by a Verey light. Almost immediately an 88mm gun guarding the approaches to the bridge was knocked out, and its attendant ammunition truck set on fire. The exploding shells made the attack even more hazardous, while the flames lit the whole area of the bridge, and doubtless added to the confusion of the defenders. Three other 88mm guns were positioned near at hand covering the northern

end of the bridge, supported by infantry with spandaus, who fired almost continuous bursts, whilst, over our heads and to our right, the supporting tanks poured out a curtain of fire.

'On reaching the bridge, a heavy timber trestle affair built by the Germans to replace one destroyed by the Belgian Army in 1940, I discovered that the sides of the road were covered by a confusion of wires, fuses, etc, of every description, easily visible from the light of the burning ammunition truck and the sporadic shellbursts. Having shot through everything I could find with my revolver, as the wire-cutters had by now fallen into the canal, I ran back, causing some consternation amongst the second wave of assaulting infantry, to see how Davies was getting on.

'A towpath ran under the near side of the bridge, and on this I found my three men still cutting detonating fuse. There were twelve ANZ 29 switches hanging from the wall, two forming alternate initiating sets for the complete demolition, and ten running to individual charges on the home abutment and the two nearest trestles. The trestle on the edge of the towpath was set with pier footing charges. It can be imagined what a tangled mass of detonating fuse was found. Also on the towpath were two Germans, one quite dead and the second suffering considerable pain from a severed right leg. Were these part of the firing party? — we never found out, for the second German, who was beyond coherent speech, died the next day.

'Once I had made sure that all the initiating assemblies had been removed from the charges, I climbed on to the bridge, where I met 'Colonel Joe' running across to join the assaulting troops, and, having reported that the bridge was safe and arranged for guards, I returned to my truck, parked thoughtfully by Trendall beside the nearby cafe, for a much needed drink.

'The Irish attack evidently took the enemy completely by surprise, and our tanks and infantry were over the bridge and attacking the enemy positions before the defenders were aware whether the rumbling tanks were their own retreating or ours attacking — they were not left long in doubt! The complete success of the plan and its execution is shown by the fact that the Irish Guards suffered very few casualties.'

The south-bank towpath where Captain Hutton found the two German casualties. The canal is now better known in Belgium as the Maas-Schelde Kanaal.

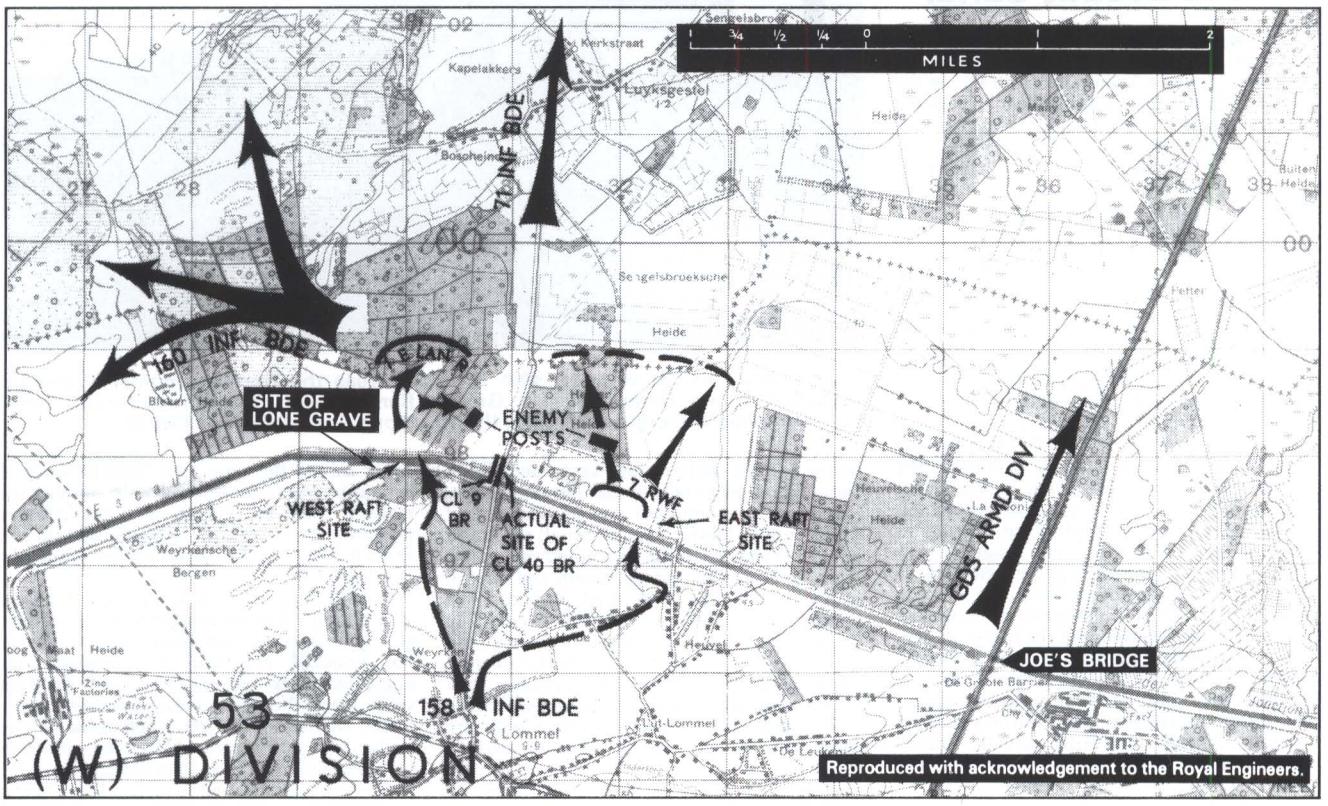
'JOE'S BRIDGE', as it was named the following day, was classified as Class 70, and it took many such loads before being accurately assessed, some time later, to a much lower classification!

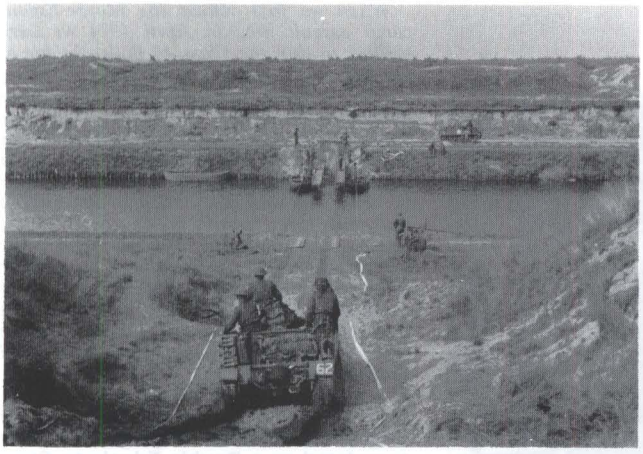
Crossing at Lommel

Seven days later, on the night of September 17/18, in order to protect the left flank of XXX Corps, 53rd (W) Division (then part of XII Corps) carried out an assault crossing of the canal at Lommel a mile or so to the west. As planning for it was taking place, aircraft and gliders for Market Garden streamed overhead. All went well with the assault boat crossings, which began at 11.00 p.m. with the 1st East Lancashire Regiment meeting little opposition and reaching their objective within 90 minutes. On the right, however, the 7th Royal Welsh Fusiliers only managed to establish a bridgehead about 300 yards along the northern canal bank having a depth of 200 yards. Rafting could only begin at the westernmost of the two planned sites at 1.00 a.m. on September 18 as the north bank of the canal at the east raft site had not yet been captured. Even so, fifty-per-cent of the construction party at the Class 5 raft site were casualties. Although still subjected to periodic small-arms fire, the raft was in operation by 5.00 a.m. and was used continuously until a Class 9 bridge had been constructed beside the road from Lommel to Luyksgestel.

'The first equipment vehicles reached the canal at 0345 hrs,' reported Lieutenant-Colonel G. G. S. Clarke, who was Commander Royal Engineers 53 (W) Division at the time, 'when unloading commenced. Considerable work was found to be necessary on the near bank approach ramp as this had to be cut through a robust canal lining of stone in concrete.

'By first light, 0515 hrs, a bulldozer was working on the near bank, half the FBE equipment was ready in the water and the far bank seat had been completed. Shortly afterwards, when the visibility improved, RE parties on both banks came under heavy fire from enemy posts dug in the woods. There





Above: **Sergeant Mapham photographed a carrier about to cross the canal via the Class 5 West Raft site on September 19 (IWM).**

Above: **No chance of crossing the canal at this spot today although a flaking sign** *(below)* **still indicates the approach.**

were several casualties and it became impossible to carry on with work. I arrived at the site at about 0520 hrs and found the sappers engaged with zest in a small-arms contest. I reported the situation to Brigade HQ by telephone, which had by this time been installed near the bridge site. In due course, a company attack was put in from the west, and, at 1030 hrs, a report was received from Brigade HQ that the woods were clear of the enemy and that work could proceed. I ordered a section to move down to the near bank seat, but, immediately they emerged from cover, they came under fire and four men were hit. I withdrew the sappers and again contacted Brigade HQ by telephone, requesting that the woods in square 3098 should be "mopped up", as work could not continue on the class 9 bridge while the enemy still remained in them.

'A spasmodic small-arms battle continued until shortly before 1200 hrs when the Brigade Commander visited the bridge site. He received convincing evidence that enemy parties were in fact holding the woods on the far bank in the proximity of the bridge site.

'A mopping up operation, by one battalion from the west, was arranged and the area was finally cleared by 1330 hrs. Thirty-six Germans were removed from slit trenches and dug-in posts within a radius of 300 yards of the far bank seat. The construction of the bridge then proceeded without further interruptions and it was opened for traffic at 1730 hrs.

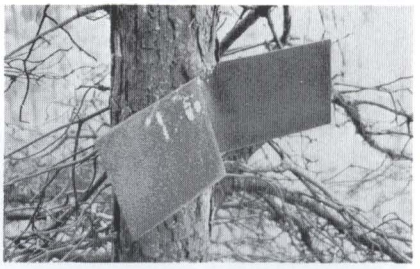
The Class 40 bridge

'Every attempt to move westwards to clear the bridgehead for the proposed class 40 bridge at De Maat was strongly resisted by the enemy and, by the evening of September 19, very little progress had been made by 160 Brigade to which this task had been allotted. During the afternoon of September 19, I was visited by Chief Engineer XII Corps and instructed to investigate the possibility of building a class 40 Bailey bridge on the site of the demolished bridge at 308977 *(see map)*. My report was to be submitted personally to Commander XII Corps at 0830 hrs on September 20.

'I met the Corps Commander, with my Divisional Commander, as arranged, and reported that bridging at 308977 was possible and that the time required would be in the nature of forty-eight hours continuous working. The necessity for clearing the debris of the demolished bridge before Bailey piers could be built imposed an unknown factor which might cause delay. I was ordered to proceed with the bridge forthwith.

Work commenced at 1145 hrs on September 20 and was completed by 1530 hrs on September 21. Traffic started moving over the bridge at 1540 hrs.

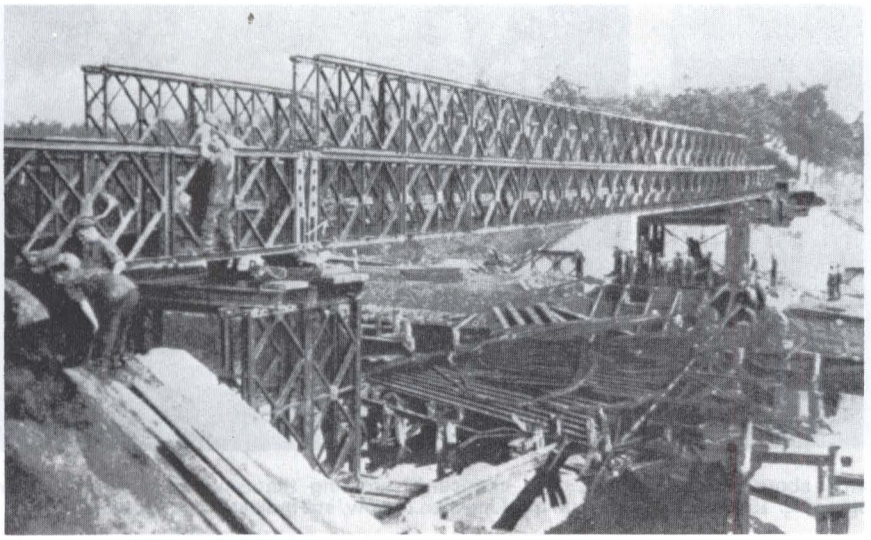
'The bridge consisted of three spans, one central 130ft double double Bailey carried on



two 10ft Bailey crib piers erected on the canal towpaths, and two 20ft double single approach spans between the abutments of the demolished bridge and the Bailey crib piers. The concrete abutments were cut down with compressors while the debris was being cleared, so that the Bailey roadway and existing approach road were on the same level. Six RE platoons were employed, three working alternately, in eight hour shifts. "Artificial moonlight" was provided throughout the hours of darkness by four searchlights placed round the site, each at about half a mile radius from the bridge.'

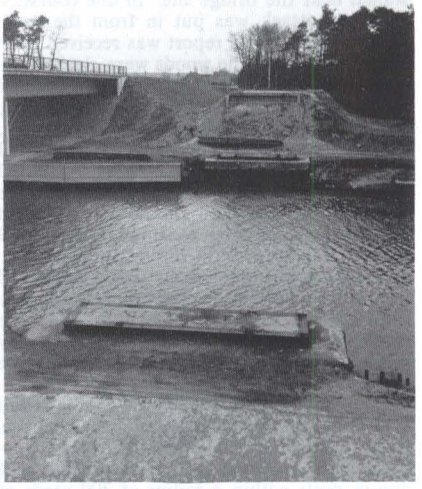
'Joe's Bridge' at De Groote Barrier, which had been a German timber, trestle construction built by them to replace the one blown by the Belgian army in the 1940 retreat, was removed in the late 1940s to be replaced by a bowstring, girder bridge.

Left: **The Class 9 folding-boat bridge beside the Lommel-Luyksgestel road bridge demolished by the Germans, photographed by Sergeant Watkins on September 20 (IWM).** *Above:* **A few rusting anchor cables from the bridge still remain at the edge of the canal today.**



When we first visited the Meuse-Escaut canal assault area in April 1974 we were thrilled to find the Class 40 Bailey bridge at De Maat still standing although it was no longer in use as a modern bridge had just been completed alongside. Although the light was fading, we took some photographs and it was lucky we did so; when we revisited the site in April 1977, the Bailey bridge was no longer there having been dismantled by the Belgian army only three months previously. We felt it was a great shame to remove this historic bridge, which had successfully withstood over thirty years' traffic, and would have thought it could have been left intact beside the modern replacement. Now all one can see are the concrete bridge abutments built by 282 Field Company RE.

Left: **The bridge under construction by 53rd (W) Divisional Engineers. It was completed as a Double Tripple to Class 40 and still remained in use until 1977** *(below left). Below:* **Today only the bridge abutments remain.**



In the forest on the north bank many of the old German slit trenches can still be seen. A few hundred yards along the southern bank we found a dilapidated yet quite unique memorial: a stone marking the position of the former grave of a British soldier who died during the attack and was exhumed after the war. Looking out onto the peaceful canal today, it is a poignant reminder of the assault crossings which were the prelude to Operation Market Garden.

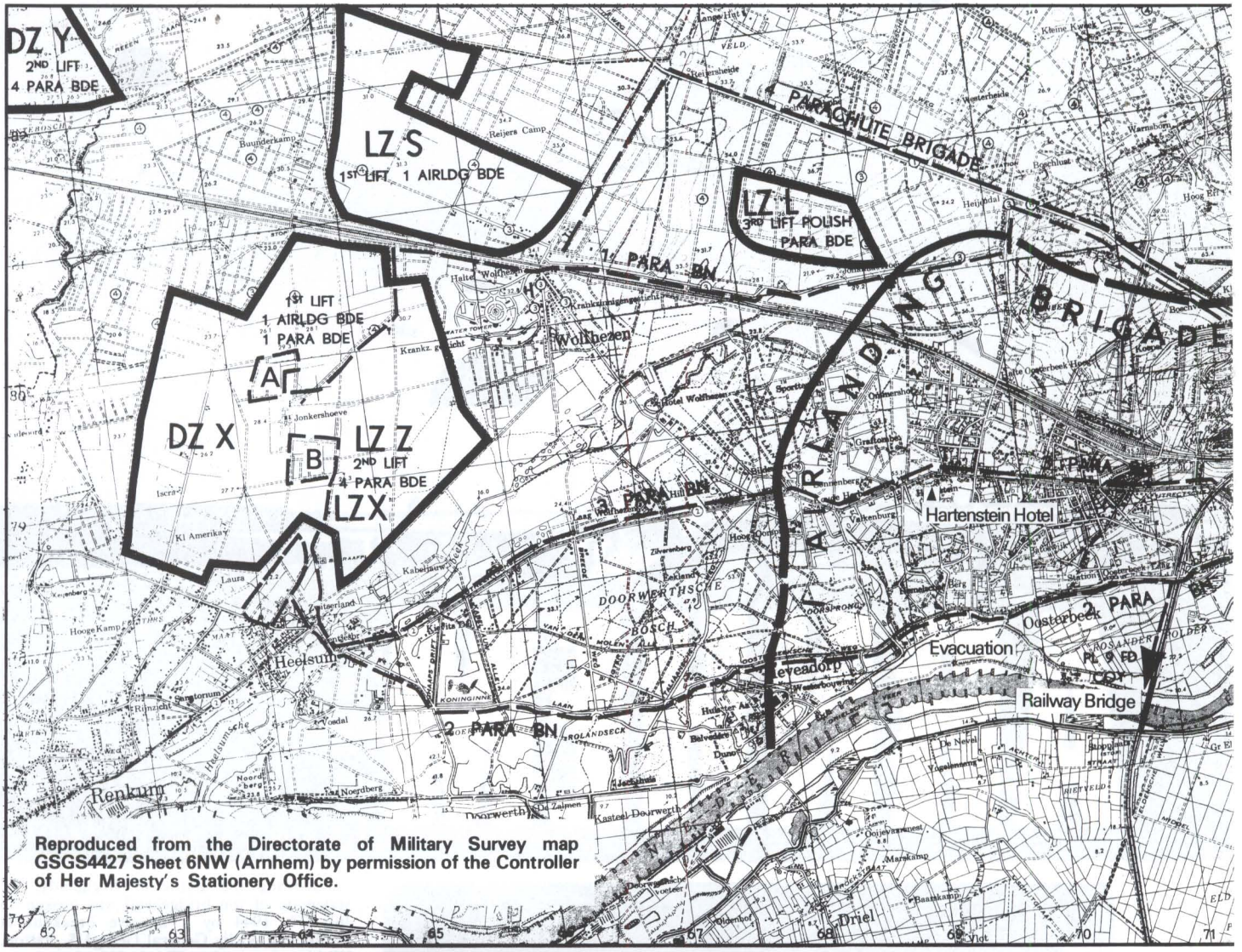
ARNHEM

Following the Battle of Normandy, the stalemate of the bridgehead was broken on July 27, 1944 by a massive breakout at Avranches led by General George S. Patton. Within days, the Third US Army was streaming across France. On August 25, Field Marshal Montgomery's 21st Army Group crossed the Seine and began its advance through Northern France, Belgium and Holland. By the time the Meuse-Escaut Canal was reached, the beginnings of a rift in the Allied Command, between the British and US Forces, became apparent, with both Montgomery and Patton pressing for priority of supplies, especially petrol.

Montgomery's plan for a swift advance through Holland, together with airborne landings to secure bridges over the five major rivers and canals on the route, was reluctantly approved by the Supreme Allied Commander, Eisenhower, in a meeting at Brussels airfield on September 10. Daring in its conception, the Market Garden operation was to result in one of the most heroic defeats of the British Army — the Battle of Arnhem.

The main purpose of the airborne landings at Arnhem was to capture the bridge over the Neder Rijn. Whilst not wanting to minimise the efforts of any troops involved by not describing the actions leading up to this, we have concentrated on the battle for the bridge as this was the object of the attack.

Above: **Sergeant Dennis M. Smith, aged 24, of the Army Film and Photographic unit, took this picture of the first troops landing on September 17, 1944. (IWM). 'Market' was the airborne part of the operation and 'Garden' the ground forces' thrust from the south.** *Centre:* **Landing Zone Z in September 1944 (IWM);** *left* **today a peaceful, empty field.**



The Defences

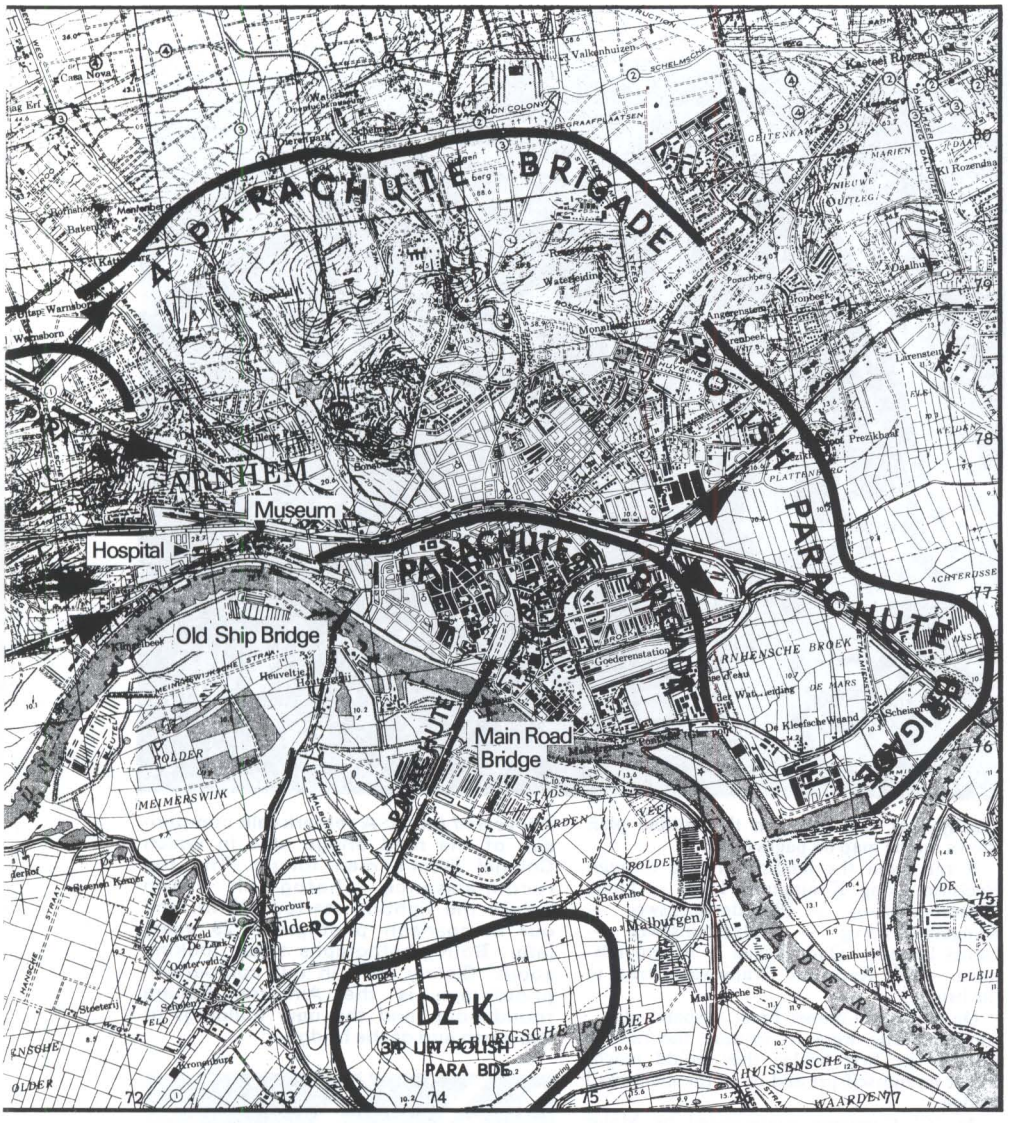
At the end of the corridor to be forced by the thrust from the south in the wake of the airborne forces, the bridgehead at Arnhem was to enable the British Second Army to advance further north into Holland and eastwards into Germany.

Advance intelligence on the strength of the German forces in the Arnhem area was far from clear. By September 17, it was estimated that 70,000 Germans with 400 guns had retreated into southern Holland. Dutch Resistance reports of SS tank formations in the area were discounted, although it was known that the main training area for Tiger tanks was situated north of Apeldoorn, 20 miles away, and reconnaissance photographs proved the existence of tanks in the area.

So far, the 1st Airborne Division had had 17 previous operations planned and cancelled since Normandy, (in which their rivals the 6th Airborne took part) and this had resulted in an eagerness to get into the war at almost any cost.

The RAF, on the other hand, had seen

Above: **Troops pictured by Sergeant Smith, advancing on the Utrechtseweg (IWM), and our comparison taken in 1973. The Dutch style cobbles and trees have been removed and replaced with a wide asphalt road. The Utrechtseweg at this point now consists of long stretches of fast road with sweeping bends, leading into Oosterbeek.**



plenty of fighting, and the reports of fearsome anti-aircraft defences at Arnhem bridge (in this case also incorrect), led them to reject a coup-de-main landing at the bridge itself, which had proved so successful in Normandy, and choose a landing area eight miles west of the town. This would mean that, although some jeeps would be landed, the majority of troops would have to march between five and eight miles to their objectives. The advantage of surprise would be lost and, because of insufficient air transport being available, considerable forces would have to be left to guard the landing grounds for the arrival of the second and third waves of reinforcements.

The German forces in the area were commanded by Field Marshal Model, whose headquarters staff were installed at the Tafelberg and Hartenstein Hotels.

The Plan

The operation was to start on September 17. The primary task of the Division was the capture of the three Arnhem bridges over the Neder Rijn. The secondary task was to establish a bridgehead to enable the troops of XXX Corps advancing from Nijmegen to deploy north of the Neder Rijn. The third task was to do everything possible to destroy the anti-aircraft defences in the dropping zone (DZ) and landing zone (LZ) areas to ensure safe landing for subsequent air lifts.

The 1st Airborne Division, commanded by Major-General R. E. Urquhart, was to comprise the following units for the initial landing:—

1st Parachute Brigade Group commanded by Brigadier G. W. Lathbury. 1st Airlanding Brigade (in gliders) commanded by Brigadier P. H. W. Hicks.

Basically it was the task of the parachutists to leave the landing grounds quickly and advance to capture the bridges, whilst the following glider-borne troops were to secure the landing-grounds, establish positions on the main roads and to protect the arrival of the second lift.

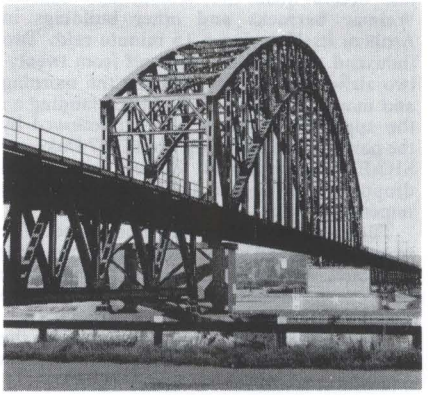
The first landings were to be at 2.00 p.m.

The second landings, comprising the 4th Parachute Brigade Group commanded by Brigadier J. W. Hackett, and the balance of the divisional troops, was to land in the early morning of the next day. Their task was to occupy the north of Arnhem and defend the landing zone for the Polish troops who would land in the third air lift. Meanwhile this would free the Airlanding Brigade troops from guarding the landing area, who would then be free to move to Arnhem.

The Bridges

The three bridges over the Neder Rijn river were as follows:— A road bridge, a huge arched iron construction, completed in July 1934. It had been destroyed by the Dutch on May 10, 1940 to try to slow the advance of the Germans in their attack on the Western Front, and had been blown completely off its pier one end into the river. The Germans had rebuilt it in its original style by the time of the attack in 1944. Because in 1934, the approach ramp had been constructed between existing houses in Arnhem, these were very close to the road, which proved significant in the ensuing battle.

Below: **The present railway bridge taken from the south bank of the Neder Rijn.** *Bottom:* **This is where the ship bridge used to cross the river; opposite is the site of the small harbour, now filled in.**



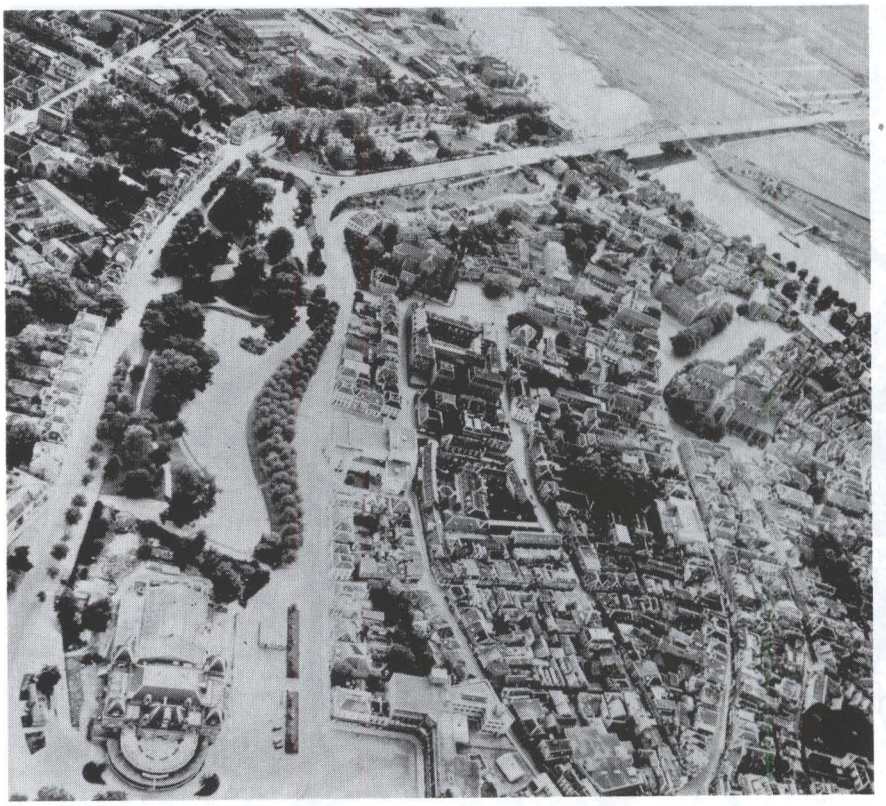
An earlier floating ship bridge had been built in the 19th century and was used by road traffic to cross the river into Arnhem. This was a few hundred yards to the west of the new bridge and is often referred to, incorrectly, as a German pontoon bridge. It did have a floating centre section of roadway which could be towed out of the way when ships or barges approached, which was then replaced.

Further up the river at Oosterbeek was the railway bridge with long raised approaches. The attacking troops landing on the Western extremities, would therefore reach the rail bridge first, then the floating bridge and finally the new road bridge.

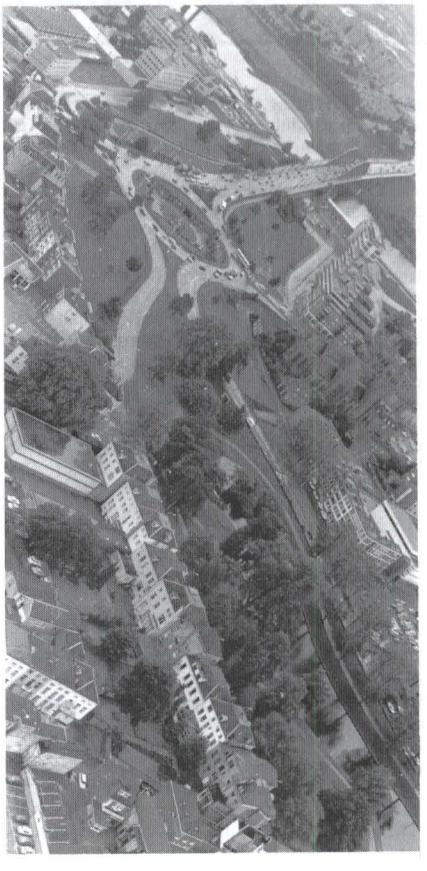
As it was anticipated that the Germans may blow the bridges plans were laid to guard against this possibility.

The first precaution was the capture of a ferryboat which was based at Heveadorp together with any barges, with the assistance of Royal Engineers.

Also provision was made for the conversion of the railway bridge into a road bridge, the construction of six raft sites and two floating Bailey bridges. The latter were stored at Bourg Leopold and bridging columns prepared, in the case of the Neder Rijn, comprising of 536 vehicles of the Royal Engineers and Royal Army Service Corps. This stock-piling of the Bailey sections necessitated the dismantling of bridges constructed earlier over the Seine, and the sending of further supplies from England via Dieppe.



Above and below: **A remarkable comparison of the road bridge area in which Colonel Frost's men fought. The top reconnaissance photograph taken before the fighting started (IWM), and our comparison photograph 29 years later. Both photographs taken looking south. Clearly seen in our comparison photograph is the Airborne Square roundabout, and the new buildings at the north end of the bridge.**



Sunday, September 17

In the morning the RAF had bombed selected targets in the outskirts of Arnhem, notably the Mental Hospital at Wolfheze, and just before noon the Willem and Saksen-Weimar barracks and other buildings in Arnhem itself during a 15 minute raid. Two thousand aircraft had taken off from twenty-two airfields in England during the morning and more than 300 gliders started landing on the appointed zones at H-Hour followed by the parachutists dropping from C-47 Dakotas. SHAEF headquarters leaflets were also dropped warning the Dutch people of the impending battle.

The landing was virtually unopposed. The troops, welcomed with open arms by the local populace, who offered drinks and fruit, were delayed in assembling and relaxed in the absence of enemy resistance.

The outline plan for the attack with the dropping zones is shown on the map on pages 6 and 7.

Race for the Bridges

One of the contributing factors to the failure of the attack soon became apparent — the radio equipment supplied did not prove adequate for the distances involved and was affected by the wooded terrain. When troops entered the town, high buildings, screened the aerials and in spite of every effort to site these as high as possible, failure of communications between the various units, who rapidly became split up and fragmented, prevented an organised overall control of the battle from HQ.

It was intended that the reconnaissance squadron assisted by 9th Field Company would race to the road bridge in jeeps. In the confusion of the unloading of the gliders and assembling it was found that all the jeeps had not arrived, and Major Gough, the commander, and his men were unable to leave.

Therefore, at 2.45 p.m., the 2nd Battalion, under Colonel Frost, moved off first by the southerly route.

The route taken by Colonel Frost was exactly that laid down in the outline plan shown on the map on pages 6 and 7.

It ran from the landing ground through Heelsum along Koninginne Laan — Oude Oosterbeekseweg — Benedendorpsweg — Klingelbeekseweg — Hulkesteinseweg — Onder Langs — Oude Kraan — Roermondsplein — Rijn Kade and Oranjewachtstraat to the bridge.

On the way Colonel Frost despatched 'C' company who were to capture the railway bridge, the first bridge they would reach, whilst he himself pressed on to the main road bridge.

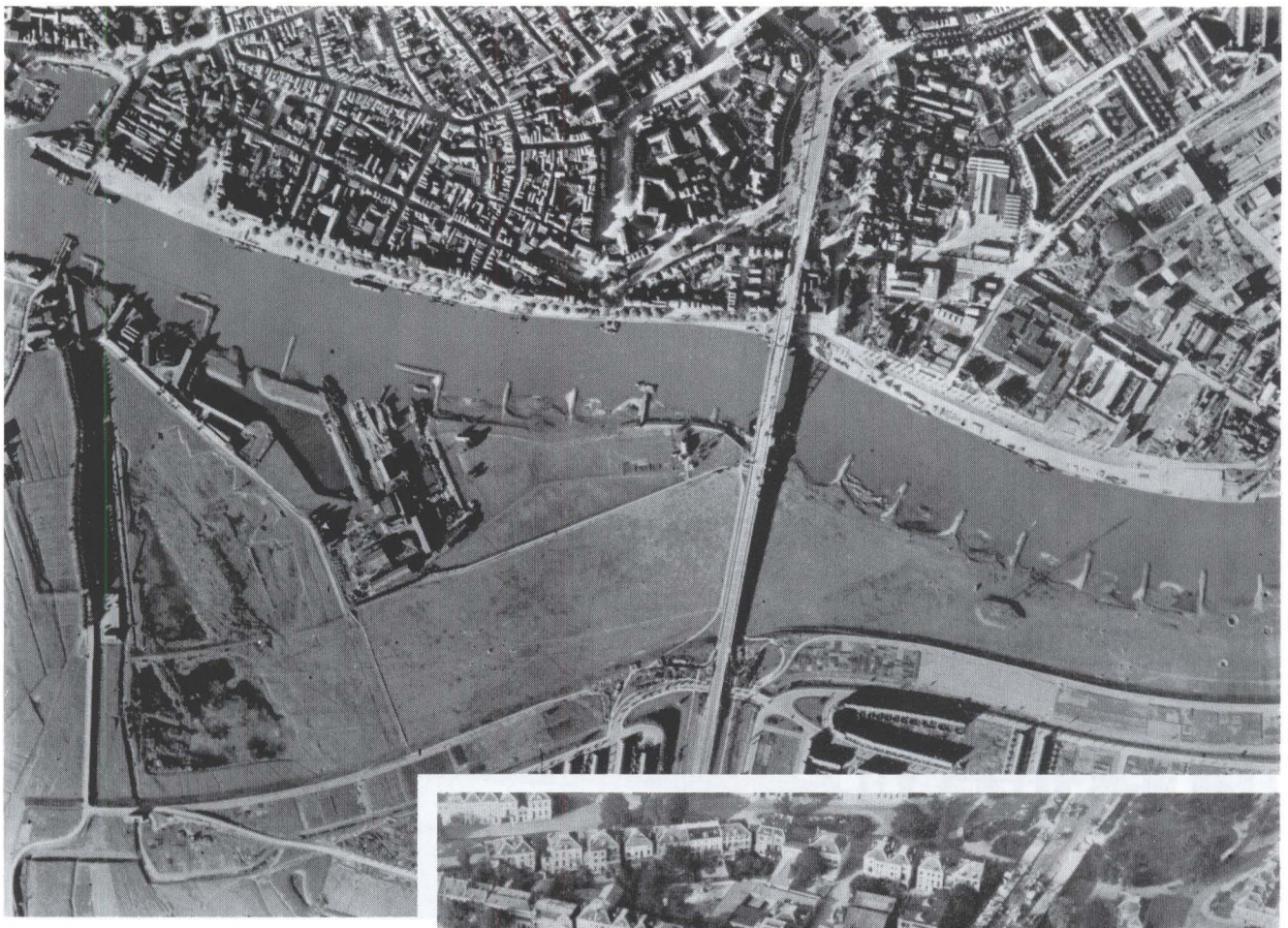
As 'C' Company commanded by Major Dover approached the bridge, a machine gun opened fire from the southern bank of the river. A smoke screen was laid and the leading platoon, under Lieutenant Barry, began to walk on the sleepers towards the south bank. Suddenly an enormous explosion shook the bridge and the southern span collapsed into the river, wounding Lieutenant Barry and two of his men.

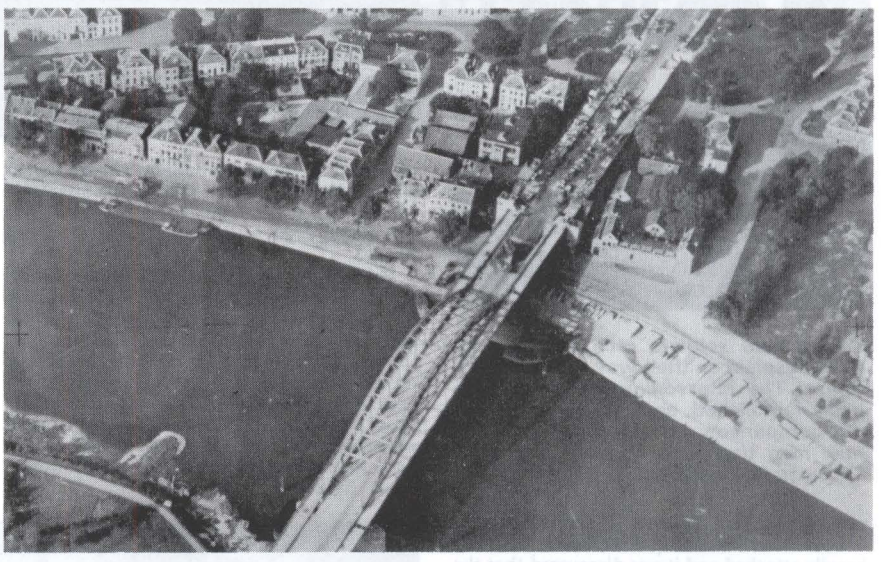
'A' Company came under heavy fire from Germans emplaced on high ground called Den Brink, to the left past the railway bridge. Leaving 'B' Company to engage the Germans and follow when they could, Colonel Frost with his Headquarters Company and 'A' Company pressed on to the bridge.

As dusk was falling, Colonel Frost's party, moving down Weerdjestraat past the ship bridge through the Eusebiusplein, came within sight of the road bridge. It appeared undamaged and German transport on it was moving south. Without firing a shot they managed to barricade themselves in the houses on either side of the northern approach ramp much against the wishes of the Dutch owners. Some Royal Engineers under Captain Mackay joined him in one of the buildings. Major Gough then arrived with part of the delayed reconnaissance squadron which had been ambushed en route.

The map shows the layout of the houses at the north end of the bridge. House (G) was occupied by the 2nd Battalion and (H) by Royal Engineers under Lieutenant Hindley, signallers and RASC.

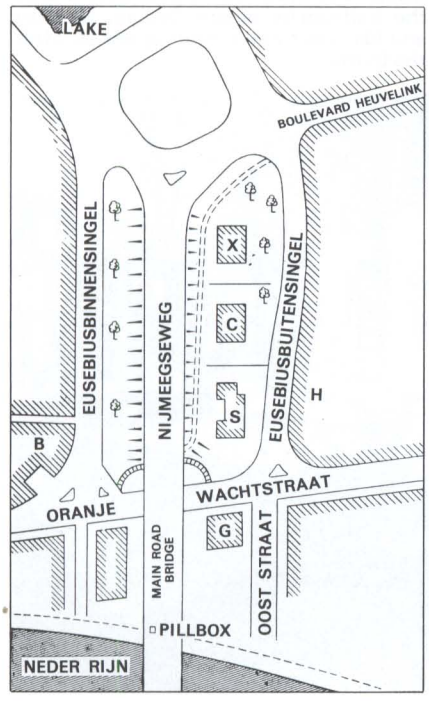
An interesting anecdote has been given by Colonel Frost who saw a single figure outside





his Battalion headquarters building on the corner of Oranjewachstraat (B). He asked a soldier to go and ask him if he was a member of the Dutch Resistance. The soldier came back to say that he wasn't a member of the Resistance and that 'he says he's Panzer SS'!

This was confirmed when a patrol was sent over the bridge to take the other end. Lieutenant McDermot took 15 men up the embankment from where they had established their position under the approach ramp supports. The patrol was repulsed by fire from a pill-box and an armoured car, which fired from the far end. A second attempt to cross the bridge was made by a patrol under Lieutenant Grayburn, which is described later, and for which he was awarded the Victoria Cross.



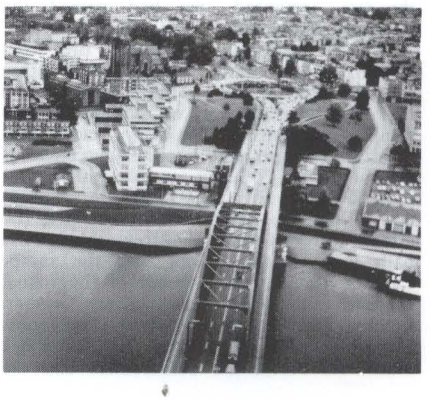
Attempts were then made by the Germans to approach from the southern end, both in lorries and on foot, all of which were successfully beaten back, the Germans leaving burning vehicles behind them.

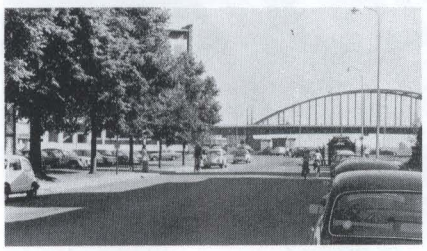
The troops at the bridge, numbering 400, were now cut off from the rest of the force to the west, and attempts to send messages through failed.

Frost first decided to try and deal with the pill-box using a flame thrower, and two engineers were detailed. They crawled up the embankment with the equipment and opened fire on the slit in the pill-box. The flame missed and set fire to some wooden huts at its rear which exploded with a tremendous roar setting fire to the paintwork on the bridge.

Captain Mackay, in charge of the Royal Engineers, had taken over the house marked (C) and the school (S) on the east side of the

Top: **The road bridge with the ship bridge and harbour on the left, photographed by the RAF, September 10, 1944. The buildings on the map below can clearly be seen (Crown Copyright).** *Above:* **The burnt out half-tracks on the bridge. The pill-box is level with the first house on the left (IWM).** *Below:* **The bridge in 1973.**





Top: **British soldiers race through the Eusebiusplein on their way to the bridge.** *Above:* **The intervening buildings have been demolished, and one can see from our comparison, taken September 1973, how near they were to their objective.** *Top right:* **Colonel Frost.**

ramp with about 25 men in each.

Soon after its occupation house (C) was heavily attacked and it was discovered that the house (X) was a German HQ. Because of this, house (C) was evacuated, and the men transferred to the school.

At 9.30 a.m. the next day, Monday 18th, a convoy of 16 armoured cars and half-tracks approached the British positions, which overlooked both sides of the ramps, from the southern end of the bridge. Fire was held until the two armoured cars had passed the buildings and reached the roundabout. Then, from both sides of the ramp, fire from machine guns, Piats, mortars and other weapons attacked the vehicles. The school first floor windows were on a level with the ramp and about 12 feet away, and it was possible to lob grenades into the open backs of the half-tracks. Vehicles were set on fire and those Germans that tried to escape were cut down. Not one of the enemy escaped the attack. One half-track tried to escape down a path between the school and the ramp. Captain Mackay, looking out of the school window, came face to face with the German Commander who quickly fired three shots from his Luger. One shot hit Mackay's binoculars before the commander and his crew were riddled with bullets. The half-track crashed into the school. During the attack the foresights had been shot off a rifle and Bren gun being fired without the operators being hurt!

Following this unsuccessful German attack, mortar fire increased and shelling from south of the river began to destroy houses. Machine guns and cannons raked the buildings.

The only artillery support Frost could call on was being fired from a position at Oosterbeek and ammunition for the guns and for Frost's mortars was limited. Further attacks were driven off but one on the Monday afternoon had to be repelled with fierce house-to-house fighting with bayonets.

By now several of the houses were burning and attempts by the troops to get provisions, which they could see in the half-track by the school were met with intense fire. The half-track was set on fire and that night their precious water supply had to be held ready in case the fire spread. Building (C) caught fire and burning fragments were blown on to the school roof which began to smoulder. The efforts of the Engineers in the school were rewarded and the fire-fighters, under con-

Below: **The burnt-out school with one of the half-tracks where Captain Mackay and his men fought, photographed 'after the battle'.**

tinual small-arms fire, managed to stop the flames spreading.

The Germans put in an attack on the headquarters building which was repulsed with a bayonet charge.

The cellars of the buildings were crowded with the wounded and the two doctors and a padre worked non-stop.

Colonel Frost had managed to contact Divisional HQ (now at the Hartenstein Hotel) but although he was told that reinforcements had been sent to the bridge, none arrived. He sent two platoons to try to break through and open a path for the reinforcements to get through to the bridge, but these efforts were defeated by tanks and self-propelled guns.

Early on Tuesday morning, 19th, a heavy German anti-tank gun fired a shot against the south-west corner of the school, blowing the corner of the building off and part of the roof. Whilst the wounded were being taken to the basement some 60 Germans arrived in the street outside and began to set up machine guns. Captain Mackay and his men quietly stood by the windows with grenades ready, with others providing a chain for more. On a given signal, the grenades were thrown and Sten guns opened fire on the street below. During the battle a keen sergeant threw a grenade which hit the top of the window and bounced back — fortunately exploding in a corner doing no harm.

In the cellars beneath the buildings the wounded, lying in increasing numbers, were joined at intervals by captured Germans.

Captain Mackay himself was wounded in the head and also had a piece of metal he could not dislodge pinning his foot to his boot.

During the day the house marked (G) changed hands several times. The enemy were infiltrating the houses north of (H). The Germans then set fire to the northernmost house and the fire quickly spread to the others in the row. Lieutenant Hindley had to evacuate the building and move to house (G) which was in the hands of the 2nd Battalion.

At 3.30 p.m. an Fw 190 approached from the south and bombed the school. The pilot was so enthusiastic that his wing hit the spire of the church nearby and he crashed into the small lake behind the roundabout to the cheers of the troops.

At 7.00 p.m. a Tiger Tank appeared from the northern roundabout and stopped on the ramp 25 yards from the school. Its 88mm gun fired two shells at the school. Luckily men had been withdrawn from the rooms hit and only minor injuries were caused. It then turned its gun on the houses on the west side and then backed away down the ramp.

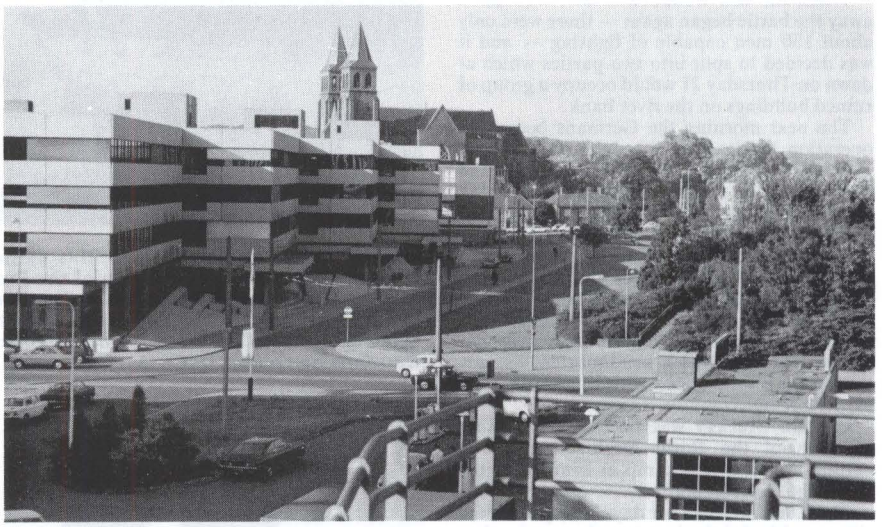
On the morning of Wednesday 20th, Colonel Frost was hit in both legs whilst preparing to send a fighting patrol to the north. He was carried downstairs to the cellar and command was taken over by Major Gough.

During the day more tanks appeared which now fired at will at the ruined buildings. Nothing could be done to stop them, but infantry attacks were still repulsed.

Three Bren gun carriers tried to break through from the west with supplies and ammunition but two were destroyed and the third forced to turn back.

The defenders in house (G) were forced out but continued in hand to hand fighting under the spans of the bridge. By 2.30 p.m. they had been driven out but continued to counter-attack to prevent the Germans setting demolition charges on the piers.

To the defenders resisting in the school, the 2nd Battalion seemed finished, but then a Tiger Tank and self-propelled gun opened fire on the school itself, which soon caught fire. Captain Mackay finally had to give the order to evacuate it, by then there were only 14 men left. The 31 wounded were surrendered and



Below: **The scene on the west of the bridge after the surrender — Colonel Frost's HQ on the left. Note the spires of St. Walburgis church hit by the German aircraft.** *Right:* **Now the site is occupied by the tax office.** *Inset:* **Captain Mackay.**

the remainder, with Captain Mackay, burst into the open where two tanks and 50 Germans were lined up.

Firing from the hip they split into groups and ran into gardens behind ruined walls. Captain Mackay removed his badges of rank, destroyed his identity card, and fell to the ground exhausted. He pretended to be dead. A German approached, and, not satisfied, ran his bayonet through him, which Mackay says 'came to rest with a jar against my pelvis. When he withdrew it, the most painful part, I got to my feet. I was then led past the place where we had our last battle with my hands on my head.'

With the capture of these last troops and the loss of the school, Colonel Frost now knew the end was near. Over 200 wounded men were being looked after in the cellars of his headquarters building, and when the flames threatened to engulf the building, Colonel Frost was persuaded to ask for a cease-fire to enable the wounded to be surrendered.

When the last wounded soldier was taken away the battle began again — there were only about 150 men capable of fighting — and it was decided to split into two parties which at dawn on Thursday 21 would occupy a group of ruined buildings on the river bank.

The next morning the Germans began the operation to clear out the defenders. Panzer grenadiers advanced street by street, throwing stick grenades through windows and firing sub-machine guns. The fighting was described by a German soldier as 'fanatical'.

By 9.00 a.m. the area was cleared — the defenders had survived for three days and nights against incredible odds, without help or reinforcements.

The last message transmitted was not received by the British headquarters — only the German — it ended with the words 'God save the King'.

Captain Mackay was taken with Captain Simpson of the Royal Engineers and two corporals to a prison camp at Emmerich just inside the German border.

At 10.00 a.m. the next day, Friday, with the silk map Mackay had managed to retain, they planned their escape.

The corporals prised loose the bars of the cookhouse and that evening they got out, followed by fourteen other prisoners. The party travelled across country towards the Rhine. The next day was spent in a hut on the river bank and that night they stole a boat from a barge and set off down the river towards Nijmegen, which they hoped had been captured by the British and Americans advancing from the south.

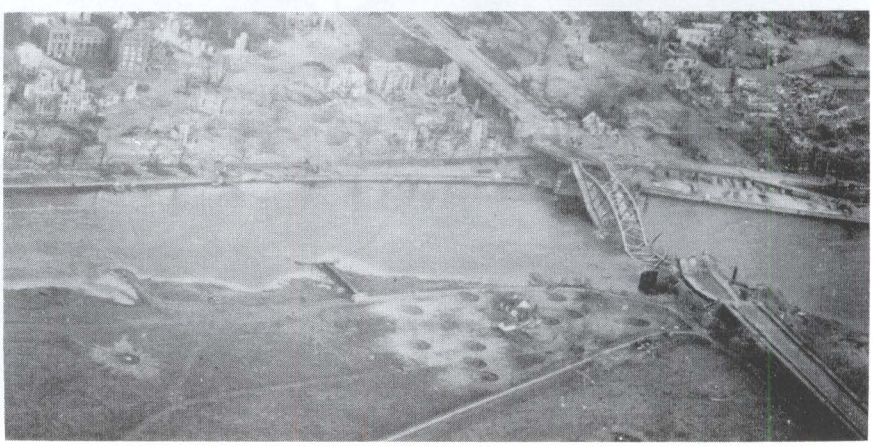
They reached Nijmegen in the early hours of Saturday 23 and a few hours later were at XXX Corps headquarters.

The road bridge was blown after the evacuation by the Germans, in October 1944, to stop the supposed advance of the Allies from the south. In actual fact the Allies did not enter Arnhem again until 1945. The ruined buildings were still standing around the north end of the bridge. These were pulled down shortly after the end of the war and the land remained waste ground until the Government Tax Office was built in 1969 on the site of Colonel Frost's headquarters. The land on the east side where the school stood has been cleared and remains as a grassy embankment to the approach ramp.

Bailey bridges were erected and used to cross the river after the war until the road bridge was rebuilt to the exact style of the blown bridge.

The ship bridge, which did not play a major part in the battle, was removed after the war and the small harbour in front of the Oude Kraan filled in.

The rail bridge which was blown up in the face of Colonel Frost's men was temporarily repaired after the war by sections of London's Waterloo Bridge and Bailey panels. This was replaced in 1948 by the present bridge.



Above: **On September 17, 1945, this damaged pillar from the Palace of Justice was unveiled by the Dutch Governor of the Province, in the presence of 200 men of the 1st Airborne Division (IWM).** *Below:* **The Airborne Square 1973 which has since been lowered because of the construction of the new roundabout with under-passes for cyclists.** *Bottom:* **The bridge photographed by the RAF on November 4, 1944, after the Germans had blown it (Crown Copyright).**

From 20,000 ft, this is how Arnhem looked from the air on September 19, at the height of the battle. Smoke drifts from burning houses by the bridge and around the St. Elisabeth Hospital and Museum. The demolished railway bridge can be seen. The Hartenstein Hotel is to the right of the oval running track at the extreme top of the photograph (Crown Copyright).

Main force – attack and defence

The 3rd Parachute Battalion, under the command of Brigadier Lathbury, assembled in a wood south of Jonkershoeve marked (B) on the map and then started their advance to Arnhem on the centre road, the Utrechtseweg. At 4.00 p.m. the leading platoon reached the crossroads where the roads from Wolfheze and Doorwerth meet. Most of the men were across the junction when a German staff car, a camouflaged Citroen, came racing down the road from Wolfheze. The driver realised his mistake, but whilst he was still skidding to a halt, the parachutists opened fire with Stens and rifles from both sides of the road. The car and driver were riddled with bullets. Major-General Kussin, Arnhem Field Commander, the front seat passenger, was shot as he opened the door and an interpreter and orderly in the back seat were shot as they jumped out of the car.

The troops, leaving the bodies where they lay, pressed on, but the crossroads then came under heavy German mortar fire.

Divisional Headquarters had first been established on the eastern edge of Landing Zone (Z) under the lee of Wolfheze woods. General Urquhart soon found that the wireless sets could not keep him in contact with any of the units, so he started after Colonel Frost in his jeep which was equipped with a radio set and signaller.

After reaching the rear of the 2nd Battalion, he left word for Colonel Frost, who was up front leading his men, to press on to the bridge.

Urquhart on his return then reached the 3rd Battalion under fire at the crossroads. As

The point marked B on the map on pages 6 and 7, where the 3rd Parachute Battalion assembled, photographed in September 1973.

he was returning to his jeep it was hit by a mortar bomb, damaging the radio and wounding the signaller.

Concerned that he was rapidly losing control of the battle, Urquhart stayed with the 3rd Battalion. He spent the night in a house in Oosterbeek.

During that time a patrol entered the grounds of the Hartenstein Hotel in Oosterbeek which Field Marshal Model's staff had hurriedly left the previous day. They entered the building through the cellars and, in the dining room, found a long table laid with places for lunch with food still on the table.

At 3.00 a.m. General Urquhart awoke and joined Brigadier Lathbury and the Battalion. Although the enemy fire was not heavy, the advance, now using the route of the 2nd Battalion, continued painfully slowly until formidable opposition was encountered at the St. Elisabeth Hospital, halfway between Oosterbeek and the bridge, consisting of tanks and self-propelled guns.

The advance fragmented and fighting broke out in side streets. The troops took to the houses and German tanks roamed the streets. Confusion reigned everywhere.

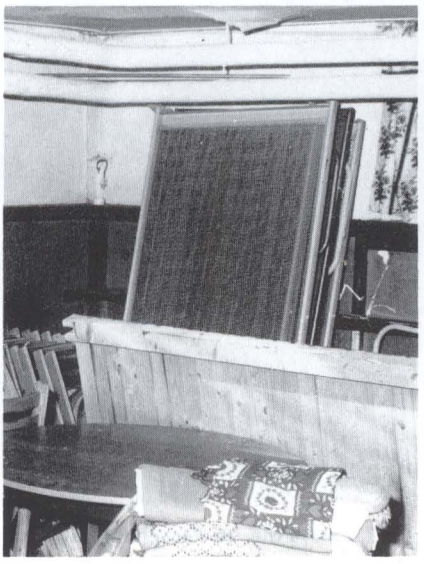
The Divisional and Brigade Commanders, with the breakdown of communications, were completely out of touch with the situation as they sheltered in a three-storey house in the middle of the fighting. By mid-morning things got much worse. The Germans had complete control of the streets using their tanks and self-propelled guns. As the Battalion had very few anti-tank guns with which to fight back Urquhart decided he must try to get himself and Brigadier Lathbury out before the enemy closed in.

Lathbury threw a bomb and they both ran down the stairs and out the back door. As they climbed over the garden fence Lathbury's Sten went off, nearly wounding Urquhart in the foot. Stopping to drink a cup of coffee offered by a Dutchman, who they did not like to refuse, they ran down a narrow cobbled alley leading into Alexanderstraat towards St. Elisabeth Hospital. As they were running down the street, followed by two other officers, Captain Cleminson and Captain Taylor, Brigadier Lathbury was hit by a machine gun firing from the top of Hendrickstraat. The others managed to drag him into 135 Alexanderstraat, a corner house.

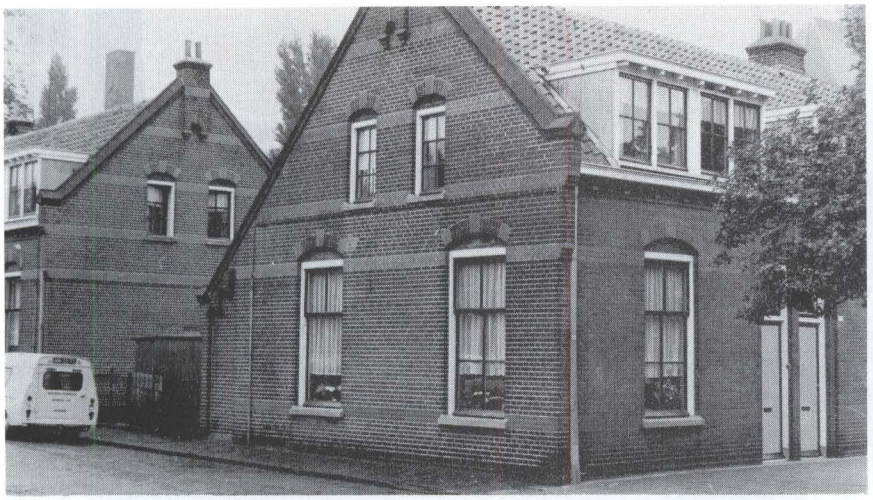
No sooner were they inside when the face of a German appeared at the window. Urquhart

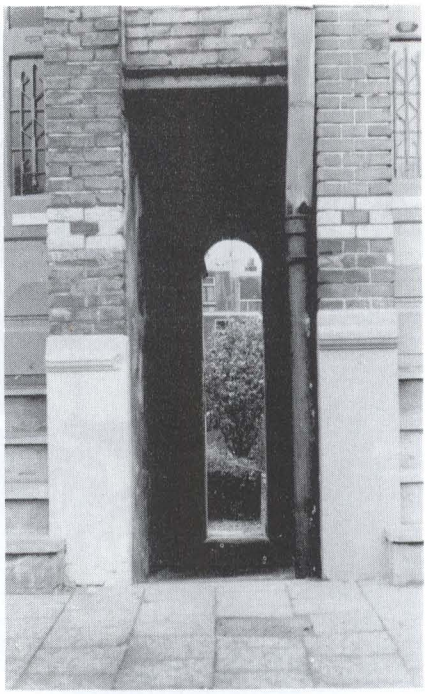
Above: **Sergeant Smith photographed Major-General Kussin in his bullet-riddled car at the Wolfheze crossroads on September 18, 1944 (IWM).** *Below:* **No ambushes in 1973, only traffic.**

Pictured in 1973, this is the cellar of the Hartenstein — where the British troops first entered and where later General Urquhart set up his operations room.



The room at the Hartenstein Hotel, photographed in 1973, where the dinner table was found laid for the German staff.





Right: **General Urquhart and Brigadier Lathbury ran up this alley to Alexanderstraat.** *Above:* **135 Alexanderstraat. The owner still has Brigadier Lathbury's binoculars which he left there when he was wounded in the street outside. General Urquhart shot the German through the ground-floor window.** *Below:* **14 Zwarteweg, where the General sheltered. (All photographed 1973.)**

lifted his revolver and shot the German in the face who fell to the cobbles outside.

Leaving the Brigadier to be looked after by the Dutch owner of the house, they left through the back door. Turning right, they rushed through the back door of 14 Zwarteweg a few yards away. This house faced the hospital and from the landing window they could see the Panzer Grenadiers in the street below.

They climbed up to the attic and waited. Urquhart felt helpless and absurd, hiding in an attic whilst his whole Division, undirected, fought a battle around him.

Taylor climbed down, and looking through the landing window saw a self-propelled gun parked outside the house. Urquhart suggested to the others that they throw some grenades and make a dash out but the others demurred and so they remained where they were.

Meanwhile Brigadier Hicks was commanding the battle as best he could from a group of houses at Oosterbeek.

During the day the next wave of reinforcements had arrived, later than expected because of fog in England. The Germans had now captured plans of Operation Market Garden, and were waiting when the gliders and Dakotas arrived over the landing zones.

Many men were killed as they floated to the ground, and gliders were hit as they prepared to land. Brigadier Hackett, Commander of the 4th Parachute Brigade, landed and was taken to Divisional Headquarters, which had now moved to the Hartenstein Hotel.

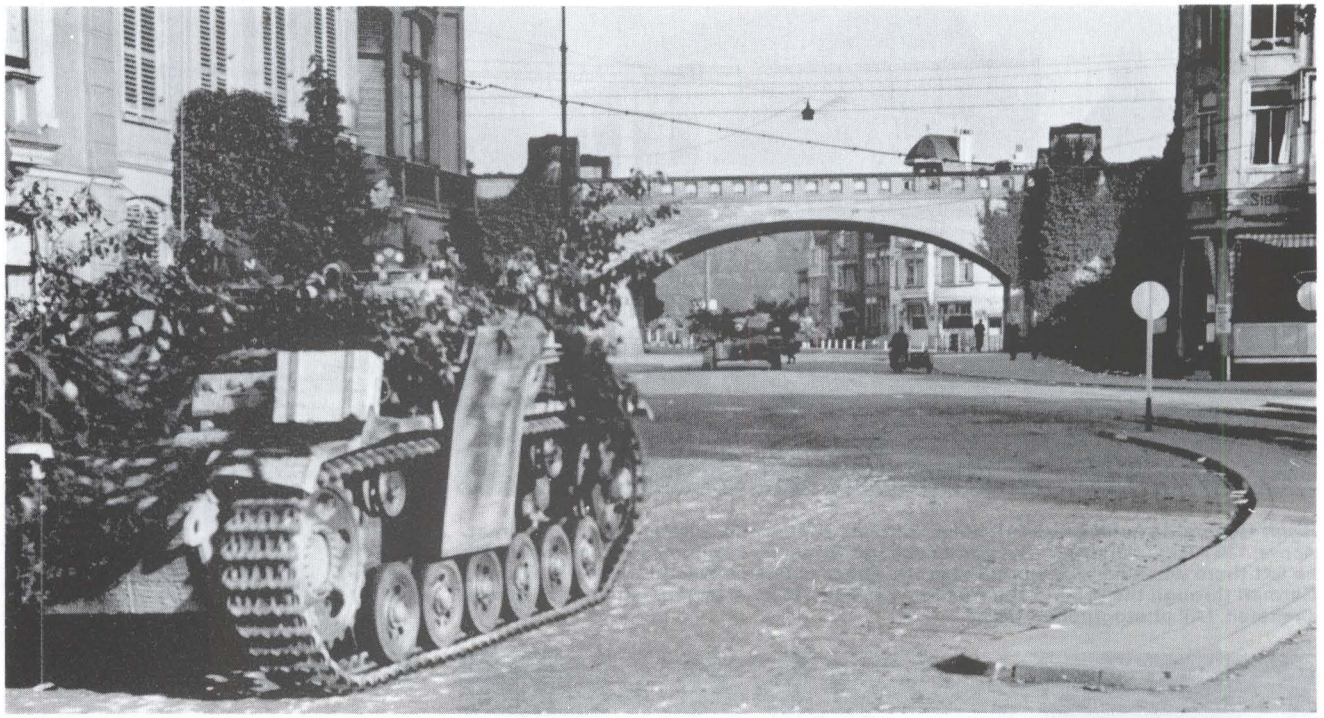
Brigadier Hackett, although the youngest, was the senior Brigadier, and when he met Brigadier Hicks at the Hotel and was told the chaotic state of the battle, began a heated argument on the conduct of the battle.

During Monday night troops of the 2nd Battalion, South Staffordshires, less one rifle company and its Support Company, alone moved forward from the Oosterbeek area to try and break through to the bridge. At dawn they reached the area of St. Elisabeth Hospital where General Urquhart was sheltering. Two Battalions attacked along the road outside the hospital on Utretchtseweg (or Bovenover meaning high road), and the other two battalions by the lower road, Onderlangs by the river. The two roads meet at a fork by Zwarteweg. Both roads were under observation and the direct fire from a brickworks immediately across the river.

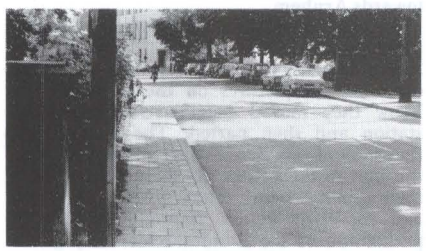
The two roads are separated by a high sloping embankment with the river at the bottom and the railway line at the top, making a natural defence barrier, and the river and railway line further constrict at the town Museum, a few hundred yards further on towards Arnhem.

At the same time, two official German photographers Wenzel and Jacobsen with 35mm cameras arrived in Arnhem. From the order of the pictures on the negatives, we know they moved together to the railway station and then parted. The photographs they took of this final British attempt to break through to the bridge are incredible, both in their quality, being taken during the battle, and for their detail. Reproduced here by permission of the Bundesarchiv, they give a fascinating insight into the German side of the battle.

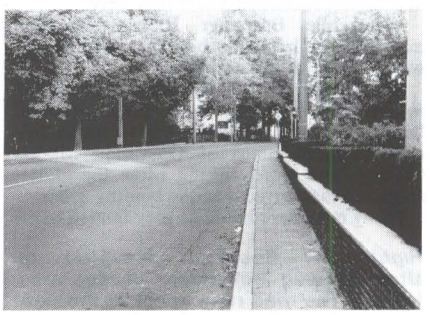
Right: **St. Elisabeth Hospital on Utrechtseweg 'Bovenover' or high road, in 1973. The road runs uphill to the right to the Museum — the British were attacking up the hill, left to right, the Germans having the advantage with their tanks at the top of the hill.**



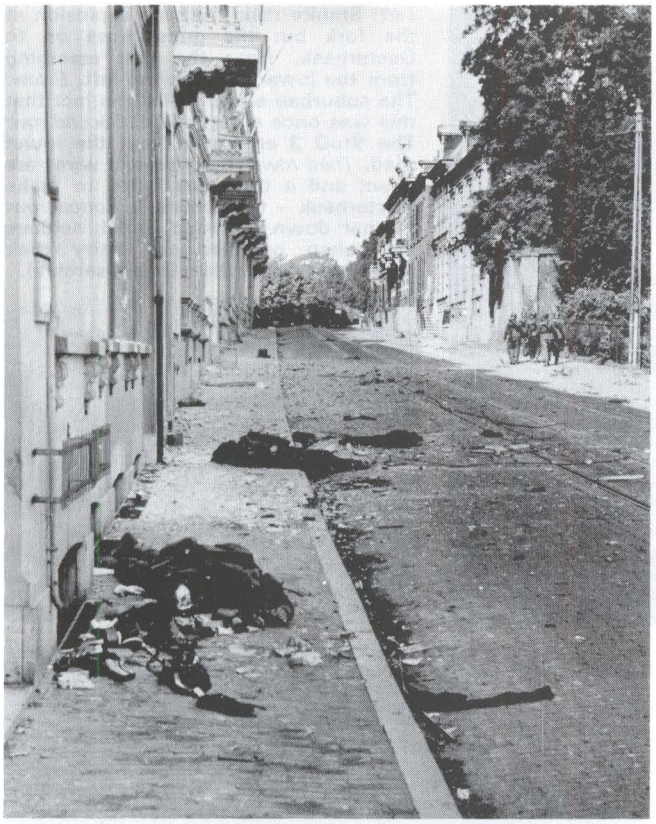
Top: German tank reinforcements, seen here in the Willemsplein, advance towards the Museum, a spot little changed today (Bundesarchiv).



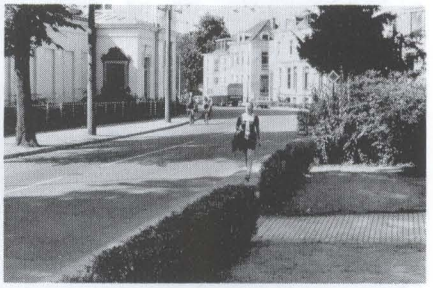
Above: Now in the Utrechtseweg, the Germans advance up the 'blind' side of the hill to the Museum (Bundesarchiv). *Left:* Although within sight of the Museum, the Germans, rifles slung, walk almost nonchalantly up the hill (Bundesarchiv).



Except for the missing tram lines, this street looks much the same twenty-nine years later.



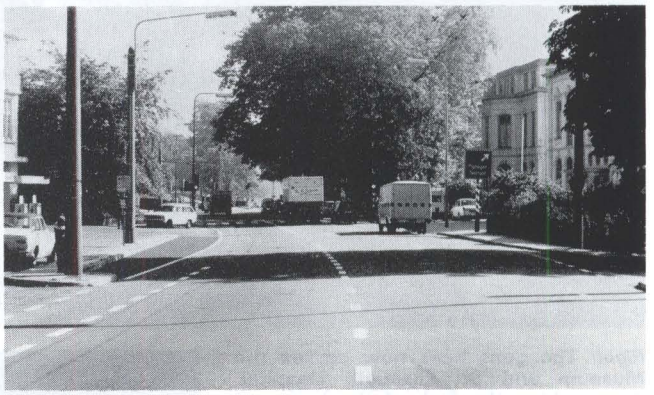
Above left: Jacobsen took this picture on Tuesday 19, 1944, showing British dead lying on the pavement since the Sunday advance to the bridge. Note the advancing German soldiers (Bundesarchiv). *Above right:* One nameplate remains on the wall on the left; the cobbles have gone and a VW van takes the place of the German assault guns. *Left:* At the Museum the fighting continues (Bundesarchiv). *Below:* A Tuesday in September 1973.

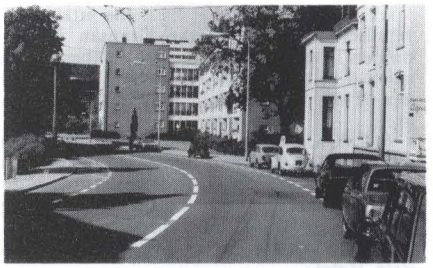


Right: The guns have now passed the Museum and St. Elisabeth Hospital. Approaching the fork of the high and low roads they pause (Bundesarchiv).

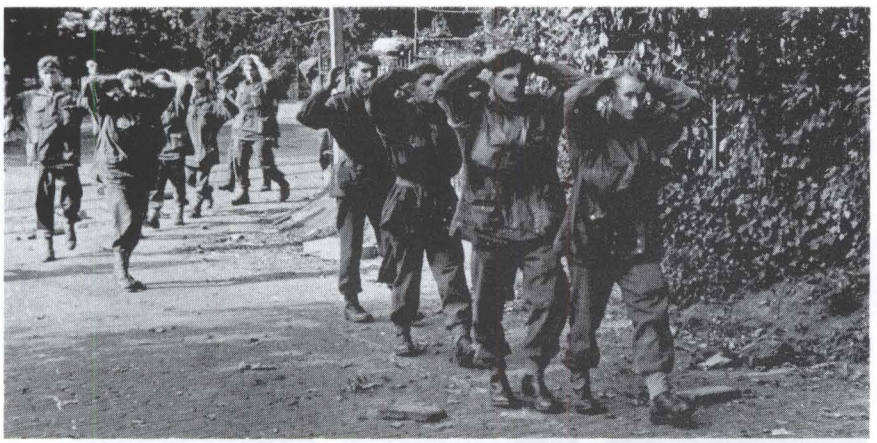
A part of the Utrechtseweg which has barely changed since the battle took place. Repairs made to the shell-damaged houses are noticeable today.

Left: **Smoke rises from an explosion at the fork but the guns press on to Oosterbeek. Note the gun emerging from the lower road on the left.** *Below:* **The suburban scene belies the fact that this was once a battlefield.** *Second row:* **The StuG 3 emerging from the lower road.** *Third row:* **The overhead wires are down and a tram has failed to make Oosterbeek — the tanks will.** *Bottom row:* **Further down the road British soldiers are taken prisoner and carry their wounded on stretchers (Bundesarchiv).**





Left: The British attempt to break through is over, prisoners are searched outside the Museum. *Centre:* Turning into Nachtegaalspad, the prisoners are marched to the station. *Bottom:* The final triumph of the British soldier in defeat! (Bundesarchiv).



Although successful at first, the attack was repulsed by tanks of the German Hohenstaufen Division by noon. The furthest point reached by the British was the Museum at the top of the hill leading down into Arnhem itself.

At 7.00 a.m. that morning, Tuesday 19, the self-propelled gun had moved away from 14 Zwarteweg, and the Dutch owner came to tell Urquhart that the British were coming down the street. Urquhart rushed out and, commandeering a jeep, drove to the Hartenstein Hotel.

The appearance of the General, after an absence of 24 hours, relieved Brigadier Hicks who handed back command.

After assembling at point (A) on the map on pages 2 and 3, the 1st Parachute Battalion attempted to advance to Arnhem by their proposed northern route which leads to the Amsterdamseweg. They had met determined resistance north of Wolfheze and a confused battle ensued in the woods in a blinding downpour of rain. By dawn on Monday most of the Battalion had reached the northern outskirts of Arnhem but at great cost in casualties. Part of the force had been driven south to Oosterbeek and Lietenant-Colonel Dobie in command, after he received a desperate message from Colonel Frost by radio, decided to abandon the original plans and try to break through to help the 2nd Battalion.

These attacks planned for Tuesday failed.

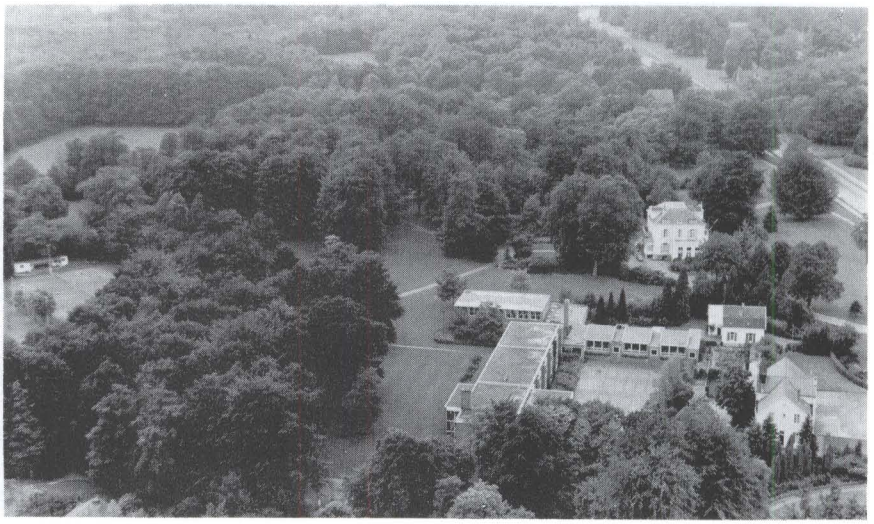
Brigadier Hackett, who had now returned to his units north of the town, found himself pinned down north of the railway line between Johanna Hoeve and Lichtenbeek. The railway line runs on a high embankment except at the crossing at Wolfheze. When the Germans put in a concerted attack to cut him off and take Wolfheze this meant it was imperative to withdraw across the railway line at the Wolfheze level crossing immediately.

This withdrawal became a chaotic retreat.

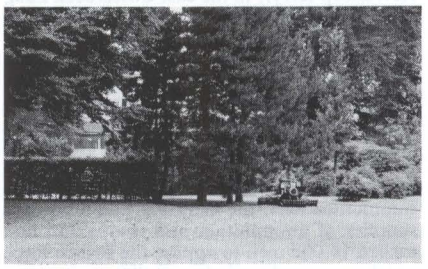
One of the Company Commanders, Captain Queripel, in a heroic stand described later, was awarded the Victoria Cross for his part in the fighting in this sector.

The decimated battalions, their transport almost totally destroyed, streamed back. The final straw was when the Polish Brigade started landing on their landing zone in the middle of the furious fighting. Some of the Polish troops were mistaken for Germans and were fired on by both the British and Germans, which quickly drove the Poles to disorder.

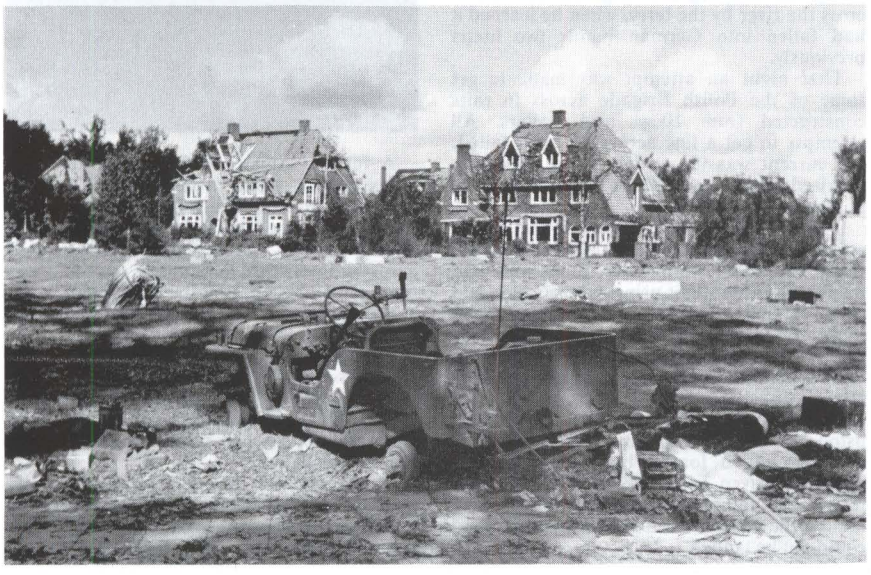
A further disaster then occurred. Because the planned supply dropping zones were in German hands messages were radioed to London to warn them and new zones marked

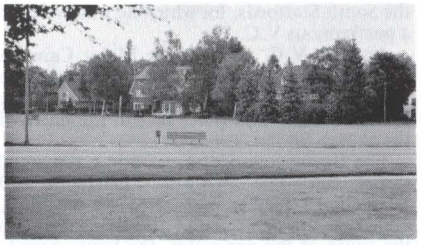


Top: **The Hartenstein Hotel 1973. The tennis courts used for the captured prisoners are on the left.** *Above:* **Relaxing on the Hartenstein lawn.** *Bottom:* **General Urquhart, next to his standard (now in the Airborne Museum, Aldershot), photographed by Sgt. Smith on September 22, 1944 (IWM).** *Bottom left:* **Major-General Urquhart returns 25 years later (Airborne Museum).**

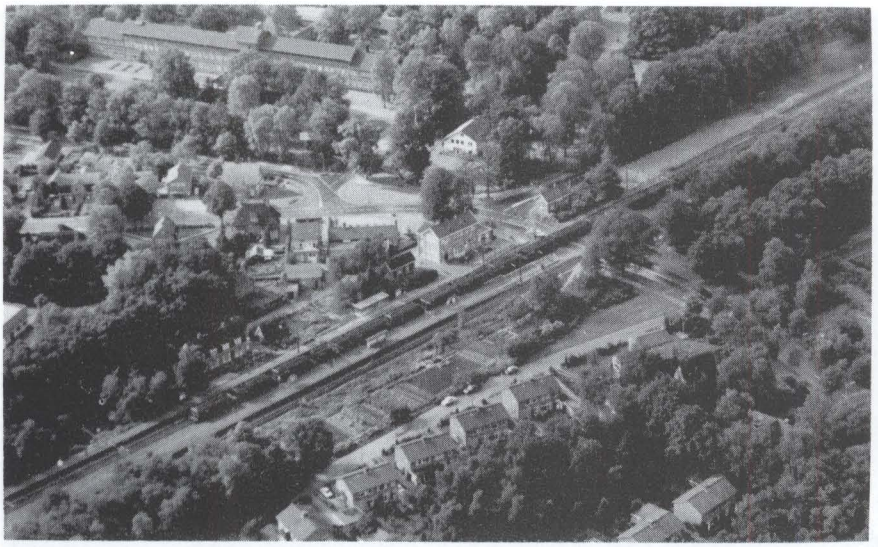


Top: **A supply drop photographed outside the front of the Hartenstein by Sgt. Smith on September 19 (IWM) with our comparison showing the Airborne memorial.** *Above left:* **Attempts are made to signal the aircraft at the back of the Hartenstein (IWM).**





Left: **This German photograph was taken after the battle from the road in front of the Hartenstein. The supply basket in front of the jeep could be the one dropping in the top photograph (Bundesarchiv).**



Above: **The level crossing at Wolfheze, 1973. The Mental Hospital bombed by the RAF before the attack is just above the crossing.** *Right:* **A scarred tree in the grounds of the Hartenstein, shown below as it was in 1973.** *Bottom:* **A soldier's grave outside the Hartenstein in 1944.**

with signal strips laid on the ground near the Hartenstein Hotel. The message failed to arrive and also the timing of the fighter escort was wrong. The supply aircraft therefore arrived over the wrong zone, without fighter escort, dropped most of their supplies to the Germans and suffered very heavily in the process.

One of the pilots who braved the heavy anti-aircraft fire was Flight Lieutenant Lord whose citation for the Victoria Cross is given later in the story.

From now until the following Monday night when the final withdrawal and evacuation of the survivors across the Neder Rijn took place, the battle developed into the defence with fragmented units, of a perimeter whose sides were continually decreasing. Colonel Frost's 2nd Battalion at the bridge was the only coherent fighting force left and its hours were numbered.

The perimeter centred on the Hartenstein Hotel — in the west as far as Westerbouwing (high ground above the crossing point of the Heveadorp ferry), in the east Oosterbeek Laag church, and from just below the railway line in the north, to the river in the south. General Urquhart, now installed at the Hartenstein Hotel headquarters, still hoped that the British Second Army, advancing from the south, would break through and relieve them.

The area within the perimeter was under continual intense German mortar, shell and small arms fire. With unimpaired outside communications, the Germans had unlimited supplies of ammunition and troops and had rushed 10,000 men to oppose the British force which now numbered about 3,000.

A collection of remnants of units named Lonsdale force, after its commander, was detailed to hold the Oosterbeek Laag church on the eastern perimeter, just above the Neder Rijn and stop the Germans cutting off the only escape route across the river.

During attacks on these positions a heroic stand was made by Sergeant Baskeyfield of the South Staffords, for which he was awarded a posthumous V.C.

Another V.C. was won by Major Cain for his ceaseless courage and determination during the whole battle and especially for one episode which took place just to the north of the church, at the laundry.

The Hartenstein Hotel was under continual sniper fire. The Vreewijk, Tafelberg and Schoonhord Hotels were used as hospitals, and were full of wounded and dying men. In the south of the perimeter, the house next to the church, owned by Mrs. Kate ter Horst, was crammed with wounded, so much so that operations had to be performed in the boiler house. A truce was arranged with the Germans to surrender some of the wounded.

The Guards Armoured Division, fighting its way north only 10 miles from the river, was restricted to a single road, and the resulting traffic jam prevented the supporting infantry from joining the tanks until Thursday, too late to help the beleaguered troops.

At 5.15 p.m. on Thursday 21, Polish reinforcements were flown in and dropped at a revised position south of the Heveadorp ferry near Driel. The Germans, warned by lookouts on the coast at Dunkirk that they were on their way, prepared a devastating reception from fighters and anti-aircraft guns. The Polish leader, General Sosabowski, landed safely and had begun to organise his unit to cross the river by the ferry, when he learned it had fallen into German hands two hours previously.

That night an attempt was made to get some of the Polish Brigade across in rafts constructed from 10cwt jeep trailers. All attempts to get a line across the river failed, the current was too strong to use these improvised boats, and efforts finally had to be postponed until Friday.

The next morning, Friday, after a trip across the river by Lieutenant Colonel Myers, Royal Engineer Commander, plans were laid for ferrying that night using rubber boats and rafts. Thanks largely to Lieutenant David Storrs of the Royal Engineers, who made twenty-three trips across the river, 60 Poles were transferred that night, but not one boat was left undamaged.

The following day attempts were made using two DUKWs to get supplies across to the surrounded forces, but although these could be driven on to the river by the south ferry ramp, the ramp opposite was in German hands; they had to be taken downstream and could not be landed.

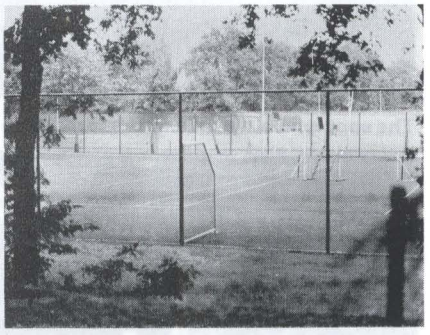
A further attempt was made to ferry the Poles across using assault boats. As no sappers were available, nor any infantry who had been trained in their use, subsequently only 200 Poles succeeded in getting safely across into British lines, many crossing into the German held part of the north bank.

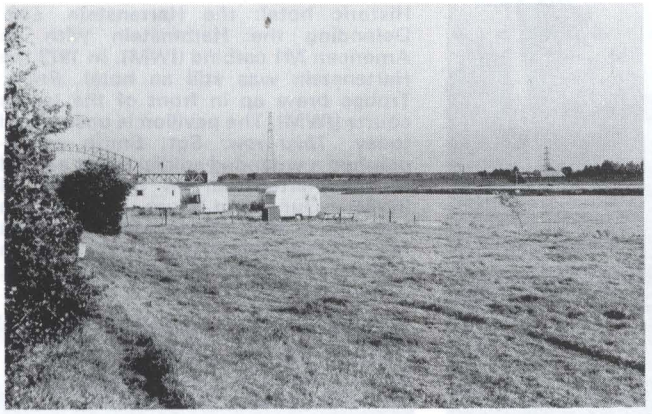
All attempts to reinforce the perimeter failed.

The Germans, aware of the approaching Allied formations south of the river, made increased efforts to wipe out the defenders before help arrived. Infiltration increased and Germans approached to within 250 yards of the Hartenstein.

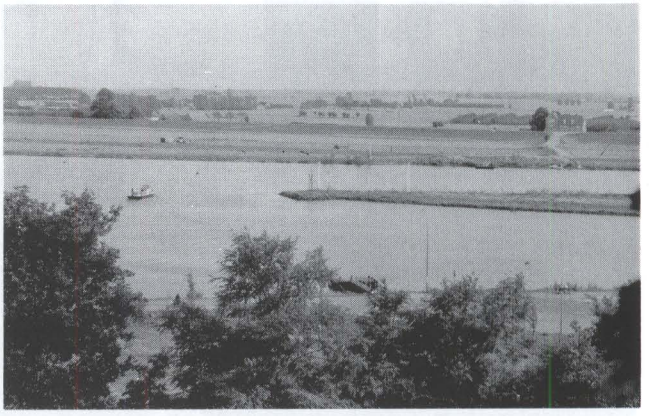
It was obvious that the position was untenable and the decision for the evacuation was made, to be carried out on Monday night, September 25/26.

Historic hotel: the Hartenstein. *Left:* Defending the Hartenstein with an American M1 carbine (IWM). In 1973 the Hartenstein was still an hotel. *Below:* Troops brew up in front of the tennis courts (IWM). The pavilion is unchanged today. *Third row:* Sgt. Smith photographed a wounded soldier being carried to the Hartenstein on September 24 (IWM). Our Land-Rover outside the entrance in 1973. *Bottom left:* This rocket fell without exploding in what was then a deer park outside the hotel (IWM). *Bottom:* General Urquhart on the terrace.



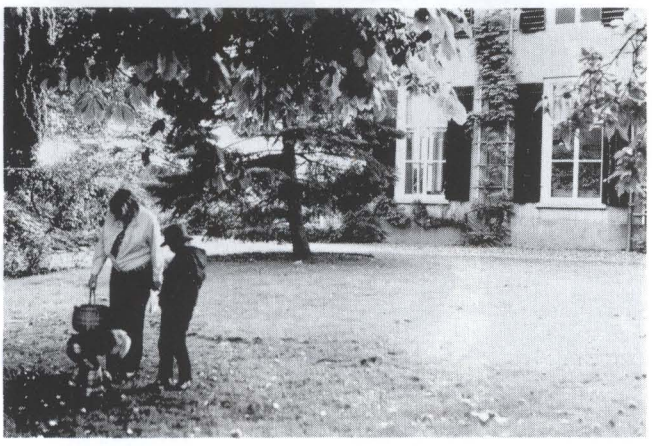


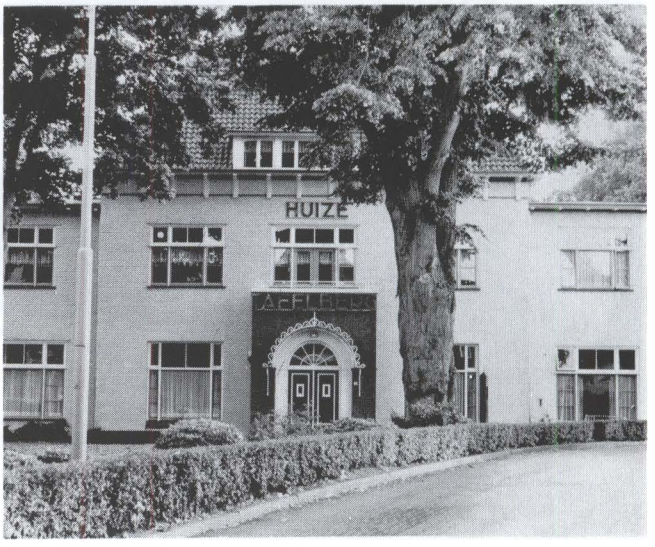
The spot where the attempt was made to cross the river.

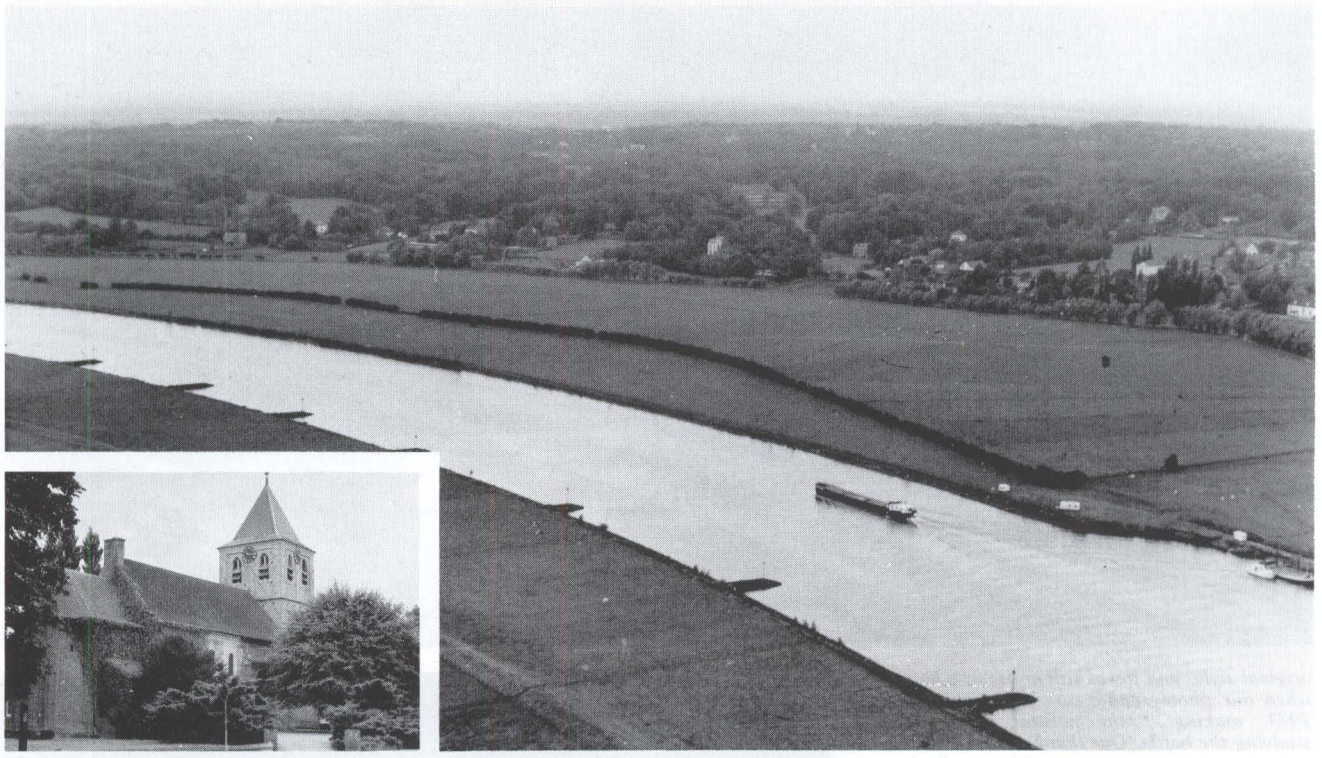


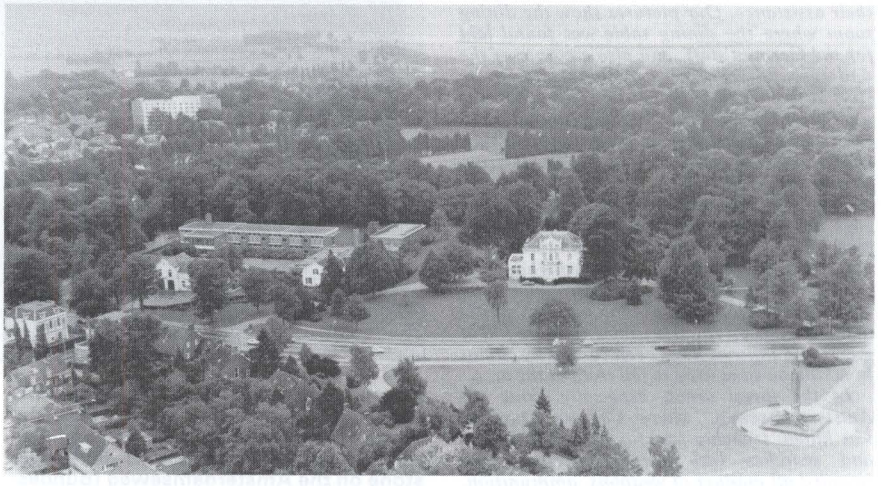
The Heveadorp ferry still plies its trade.

Above: **Outside Vreewijk Hotel after the battle (Bundesarchiv).** *Below left:* **Now children collect conkers on the lawn of Mrs. Kate ter Horst's house.** *Below right:* **Tafelberg Hotel — Model's HQ later used as a hospital during the fighting.**









The Evacuation

The 43rd Division together with Canadian Sappers were to man the boats. These were brought up by road and off-loaded by a farm to the south of the river. From here they had to be carried 500 yards to the crossing site.

During the day more units became surrounded as enemy infiltration increased and the shelling and mortaring of the constricting perimeter continued. Parties were detailed to mark the route to be followed to the river with white tape. As evening fell, the 2,500 troops remaining wrapped up their boots with cloth to deaden the sound. It was raining heavily with a strong wind, which helped to muffle the withdrawal. Beacon fires were lit to guide the boats, and tracer was fired overhead from armoured cars on the road on the south bank, to give direction to the sappers manning the boats. The river bank rapidly became churned up in the rain, and the progress became very difficult.

Artillery fire from 43rd Division, south of the river, started at 9.00 p.m. and helped drown any sounds and at the same time keep the German's heads down. Enemy fire did slacken and, at 9.45 p.m., the troops moved off. Ferrying started at 10.00 p.m.

As the men arrived at the river, they lay down to await their turn. Some boats were hit but most of the enemy fire was too high. The rain affected the motors in the boats which led to endless trouble.

At 5.45 a.m. ferrying had to stop as, with daylight, enemy guns became more active. The last boat carrying 36 men completed the evacuation of 2,720 men — 300 still remained on the north bank. Some men swam across and a further attempt was made the next night to pick up survivors.

In all, the division, which started out with 10,095 men, lost 7,605, although many of those captured made their way back to British lines in the days which followed.

Much damage was caused to Arnhem in the landing, and the town was damaged even further in the Allied bombing raids which followed.

Today there is virtually no sign of ruined buildings and much re-development has taken place. Main roads which were constructed of fire-baked bricks (unlike English cobbles), have been widened and re-surfaced and of the three routes taken by the troops, that of the 2nd Battalion—the lower road, remains the most original. Only at Heelsum has a new motorway carved a slice out of the route.

The landing grounds are still to be seen growing crops and root vegetables as in 1944. Each year after ploughing, parts of the gliders (which were all burnt by the Germans after the evacuation) are unearthed.

Memorial plaques will be found in many places and at Heelsum crossroads an unusual monument, made out of supply containers and shell cases has been erected. (It has been moved from its original site because of nearby road re-construction.)

Of the hotels which figured in the operation, the Schoonhard was so badly damaged that it was demolished and completely rebuilt. The Vreewijk Hotel remains on the Utrechtseweg, and was on the edge of the final perimeter. The Tafelberg, originally Model's headquarters, and used during the battle as a hospital, has been repaired and is now a Roman Catholic Institute.

The Hartenstein Hotel with its surrounding parkland must be one of the most historic buildings from any of the campaigns of the last war. Repaired and rebuilt largely in its

Top: **This is where the evacuation took place. Photograph taken 1973 looking north.** *Inset:* **Oosterbeek Laag church.** *Centre:* **Looking from the Hartenstein to the Neder Rijn showing the extent of the final perimeter. The hedge in the top photograph can be seen by the river.** *Below:* **Sergeant Dennis M. Smith who took the photographs in Arnhem in 1944 (IWM).**

original style, and it was still in use as a hotel when our photographic survey was made in 1973, making it the natural centre for studying the battle. Our thanks to Mr. W. A. Strijland, the then owner, and his family for their assistance. Our pictures show the dining room where the dining table was found laid for the German staff, and also a corner of the underground cellar used by the headquarters staff at the height of the battle. This cellar was used after the war for a Dutch style 'pub', and the original signatures on the walls have been added to by the graffiti of many 'Kilroys' from all over the world.

The tennis courts used as a ready-made cage for German prisoners remain, although resurfaced as the original ones were criss-crossed with trenches. Trees throughout the park are shell-scarred, indeed throughout the whole of the Oosterbeek-Arnhem area. Metal detector tests on the trees show they are full of metal and injuries have been caused by chains breaking on saws used to fell trees in the area.

In the forest areas, especially along the Amsterdamseweg, where Captain Queripel was killed, trenches and foxholes still remain and searches with metal detectors have revealed all manner of weapons, ammunition, grenades and equipment.

To see the final evacuation area, the terrace of Westerbowing provides the best view. The banks of the Neder Rijn have been altered and a spit of land with a sluice constructed. Many items of equipment were found on the river bank during these alterations. The brickworks on the far bank, from which the Germans must have had shooting gallery type targets on the exposed roads opposite, still produce a particular Dutch type of brick.

We appreciate and record our thanks to the many Dutch people who helped us in the preparation of this article, especially Mr. A. Groeneweg of Bibliotheek Arnhem and Mr. J. Voskuil and his son who since 1949 have amassed what must be the most comprehensive photographic, film and sound library of the Arnhem battle.

General Urquhart retired from the army with the rank of Major-General. He is now living in Scotland.

Colonel Frost was wounded at the bridge and taken prisoner. He was freed by American forces in April 1945. He left the army in 1968, a Major-General, and is now a farmer in Hampshire.

Captain Mackay remained in the army after the war and is now a Major-General serving as Chief Engineer, HQ. British Army of the Rhine.

Above, centre and right: **A remarkable series of photographs taken after the battle. These dead soldiers were photographed by the Germans at the 6km milestone on the Amsterdamseweg (Bundesarchiv). The Dutch buried the British dead by the milestone. Mr. Adrian Groeneweg of Bibliotheek Arnhem points out the exact spot in 1973 but Arnhem has grown and is now only 5km away!** *Below:* **The battle over, the Germans burn the gliders.**

Arnhem VCs

Five Victoria Crosses were awarded, four posthumously, for bravery at Arnhem. The citations of Lance-Sergeant Baskeyfield, Captain Cain (who now lives in the Isle of Man), Lieutenant Grayburn, Flight Lieutenant Lord and Captain Queripel are reproduced here.

Lance-Sergeant John Daniel Baskeyfield, The South Staffordshire Regiment (1st Airborne Division) (Stoke-on-Trent).

"On 20th September, 1944, during the battle of Arnhem, Lance-Sergeant Baskeyfield was the NCO in charge of a six-pounder anti-tank gun at Oosterbeek. The enemy developed a major attack on this sector with infantry, tanks and self-propelled guns with the obvious intent to break into and over-run the battalion position. During the early stage of the action the crew commanded by this NCO was responsible for the destruction of two Tiger tanks and at least one self-propelled gun, thanks to the coolness and daring of this NCO who, with complete disregard for his own safety, allowed each tank to come well within 100 yards of his gun before opening fire.

In the course of this preliminary engagement Lance-Sergeant Baskeyfield was badly wounded in the leg and the remainder of his crew were either killed or badly wounded.

During the brief respite after this engagement Lance-Sergeant Baskeyfield refused to be carried to the regimental aid post and spent his time attending to his gun and shouting encouragement to his comrades in neighbouring trenches.

After a short interval the enemy renewed the attack with even greater ferocity than before, under cover of intense mortar and shell fire. Manning his gun quite alone, Lance-Sergeant Baskeyfield continued to fire round after round at the enemy until his gun was put out of action. By this time his activity was the main factor in keeping the enemy tanks at bay. The fact that the surviving men in his vicinity were held together and kept in action was undoubtedly due to his magnificent example and outstanding courage. Time after time enemy attacks were launched and driven off. Finally, when his gun was knocked out, Lance-Sergeant Baskeyfield crawled, under intense enemy fire, to another six-pounder gun nearby, the crew of which had been killed, and proceeded to man it single-handed. With his gun he engaged an enemy self-propelled gun which was approaching to attack. Another soldier crawled across the open ground to assist him but was killed almost at once. Lance-Sergeant Baskeyfield succeeded in firing two rounds at the self-propelled gun, scoring one direct hit which rendered it ineffective. Whilst preparing to fire a third shot, however, he was killed by a shell from a supporting enemy tank.

The superb gallantry of this NCO is beyond praise. During the remaining days at Arnhem stories of his valour were a constant inspiration to all ranks. He spurned danger, ignored pain and, by his supreme fighting spirit, infected all who witnessed his conduct with the same aggressiveness and dogged devotion to duty which characterized his actions throughout."

Top: **The StuG 3 knocked out by Baskeyfield. Photograph taken on Benedendorpsweg looking towards Acacialaan.** *Centre:* **Acacialaan — Illustrated London News artist's impression of Baskeyfield's heroic stand.** *Bottom:* **Acacialaan photographed today. The silver birch remains.**

An 80-minute cinemascope amateur film has been made by Bill Townley called 'Baskeyfield VC'. As Baskeyfield was a fellow Staffordian, he felt that the memory of how Baskeyfield died was being forgotten, and so used his hobby of widescreen 8mm cine-photography to help keep the story alive. For an amateur production, the film is incredibly professional with tanks (provided by the 16th 5th Lancers) machine guns, explosives, realistically filmed in Staffordshire and taking three years to make. If any reader has the opportunity to see this film (of which, unfortunately, Bill Townley only has one copy), it is well worth seeing.

Captain (Temporary Major) Robert Henry Cain, The Royal Northumberland Fusiliers (Attached The South Staffordshire Regiment) (1 Airborne Div.).

"In Holland on 19th September, 1944, Major Cain was commanding a rifle company of the South Staffordshire Regiment during the battle of Arnhem when his company was cut off from the rest of the battalion and during the next six days was closely engaged with enemy tanks, self-propelled guns and infantry. The Germans made repeated attempts to break into the company's position by infiltration, and had they succeeded in doing so the whole situation of the airborne troops would have been jeopardized.

Major Cain, by his outstanding devotion to duty and remarkable powers of leadership, was to a large extent personally responsible for saving a vital sector from falling into the hands of the enemy.

On 20th September a Tiger tank approached the area held by his company and Major Cain went out alone to deal with it armed with a Piat. Taking up a position he held fire until the tank was only 20 yards away when he opened up. The tank immediately halted and turned its guns on him, shooting away a corner of the house near where this officer was lying. Although wounded by machine-gun bullets and falling masonry, Major Cain continued firing until he had scored several direct hits, immobilized the tank and supervised the bringing up of a 75mm howitzer which completely destroyed it. Only then would he consent to have his wounds dressed.

The next morning this officer drove off three more tanks by the fearless use of his Piat, on each occasion leaving cover and taking up position in open ground with complete disregard for his personal safety.

During the following days, Major Cain was everywhere where danger threatened, moving amongst his men and encouraging them by his fearless example to hold out. He refused rest and medical attention in spite of the fact that his hearing had been seriously impaired because of a perforated eardrum and he was suffering from multiple wounds.

On the 25th September the enemy made a concerted attack on Major Cain's position, using self-propelled guns, flame-throwers and infantry. By this time the last Piat had been put out of action and Major Cain was armed with only a light 2-inch mortar. However, by skilful use of this weapon and his daring leadership of the few men still under his command, he completely demoralized the enemy who, after an engagement lasting more than three hours, withdrew in disorder.

Throughout the whole course of the Battle of Arnhem, Major Cain showed superb gallantry. His powers of endurance and leadership were the admiration of all his fellow officers and stories of his valour were being constantly exchanged amongst the troops. His coolness and courage under incessant fire could not be surpassed."

After the war Major Cain returned to his pre-war job with the Shell Company. He went to the Far East and later worked in their West African office. He returned in 1965 and has recently settled in the Isle of Man, his family home. His beret, smock and insignia worn when he won the VC are in the Regimental Museum of the Staffordshire Regiment at Whittington Barracks, Lichfield.

The rebuilt laundry at Oosterbeek today—one of the places where Major Cain fought.

Lieutenant John Grayburn, 2nd Battalion The Parachute Regiment.

"Lieutenant John Grayburn was a platoon commander of the Parachute Battalion which was dropped on 17th September, 1944, with the task of seizing and holding the bridge over the Rhine at Arnhem.

The north end of the bridge was captured and, early in the night, Lieut Grayburn was ordered to assault and capture the southern end with his platoon. He led his platoon on to the bridge and began the attack with the utmost determination, but the platoon was met with a hail of fire from two 20mm quick-firing guns and from the machine guns of an armoured car. Almost at once Lieut Grayburn was shot through the shoulder. Although there was no cover on the bridge, and in spite of his wound, Lieut Grayburn continued to press forward with the greatest dash and bravery until casualties became so heavy that he was ordered to withdraw. He directed the withdrawal from the bridge personally and was himself the last man to come off the embankment into comparative cover. Later his platoon was ordered to occupy a house which was vital to the defence of the bridge and he personally organised the occupation of the house.

Throughout the next day and night, the enemy made ceaseless attacks on the house, using not only infantry with mortars and machine guns but also tanks and self-propelled guns. The house was very exposed and difficult to defend, and the fact that it did not fall to the enemy must be attributed to Lieut Grayburn's great courage and inspiring leadership. He constantly exposed himself to the enemy's fire while moving among and encouraging his platoon and seemed completely oblivious to danger.

On the 19th September, the enemy renewed his attacks, which increased in intensity, as the house was vital to the defence of the bridge. All attacks were repulsed, due to Lieut Grayburn's valour and skill in organising and encouraging his men, until eventually the house was set on fire and had to be evacuated.

Lieut Grayburn then took command of the elements of all arms including the remainder of his company and re-formed them into a fighting force. He spent the night organising a defensive position to cover the approaches to the bridge.

On 20th September, 1944, he extended his defence by a series of fighting patrols which prevented the enemy gaining access to the houses in the vicinity, the occupation of which would have prejudiced the defence of the bridge. This forced the enemy to bring up tanks which brought Lieut Grayburn's positions under such heavy fire that he was forced to withdraw to an area farther north. The enemy now attempted to lay demolition charges under the bridge and the situation was critical. Realising this, Lieut Grayburn organised and led a fighting patrol which drove the enemy off temporarily, and gave time for the fuses to be removed. He was again wounded, this time in the back, but refused to be evacuated.

Finally, an enemy tank, against which Lieut Grayburn had no defence, approached so close to his position that it became untenable. He then stood up in full view of the tank and personally directed the withdrawal of his men to the main defensive perimeter to which he had been ordered. He was killed that night.

From the evening of 17th September until the night of 20th September, 1944, a period of over three days, Lieut Grayburn led his men with supreme gallantry and determination. Although in pain and weakened by his wounds, short of food and without sleep, his

courage never flagged. There is no doubt that, had it not been for this Officer's inspiring leadership and personal bravery, the Arnhem Bridge could never have been held for this time."

Flight Lieutenant David Samuel Anthony Lord, D.F.C., Royal Air Force, No. 271 Squadron, Transport Command.

"Flight Lieutenant Lord was pilot and captain of a Dakota aircraft detailed to drop supplies at Arnhem on the afternoon of the 19th September, 1944. Our airborne troops had been surrounded and were being pressed into a small area defended by a large number of anti-aircraft guns. Air crews were warned that intense opposition would be met over the dropping zone. To ensure accuracy they were ordered to fly at 900 ft. when dropping their containers.

While flying at 1,500 ft. near Arnhem the starboard wing of Flight Lieutenant Lord's aircraft was twice hit by anti-aircraft fire. The starboard engine was set on fire. He would have been justified in leaving the main stream of supply aircraft and continuing at the same height or even abandoning his aircraft. But on learning that his crew were uninjured and that the dropping zone would be reached in three minutes he said he would complete his mission, as the troops were in dire need of supplies.

By now the starboard engine was burning furiously. Flight Lieutenant Lord came down to 900 ft. where he was singled out for the concentrated fire of all the anti-aircraft guns. On reaching the dropping zone he kept the aircraft on a straight and level course while supplies were dropped. At the end of the run, he was told that two containers remained.

Although he must have known that the collapse of the starboard wing could not be long delayed, Flight Lieutenant Lord circled, rejoined the stream of aircraft and made a second run to drop the remaining supplies. These manoeuvres took eight minutes in all, the aircraft being continuously under heavy anti-aircraft fire.

His task completed, Flight Lieutenant Lord ordered his crew to abandon the Dakota, making no attempt himself to leave the aircraft, which was down to 500 ft. A few seconds later, the starboard wing collapsed and the aircraft fell in flames. There was only one survivor, who was flung out while assisting other members of the crew to put on their parachutes.

By continuing his mission in a damaged and burning aircraft, descending to drop the supplies accurately, returning to the dropping zone a second time and, finally, remaining at the controls to give his crew a chance of escape, Flight Lieutenant Lord displayed supreme valour and self-sacrifice."

A slit-trench in the forest today near where Captain Queripel was killed.

Captain Lionel Ernest Queripel, 10th Battalion, The Parachute Regiment.

"At Arnhem on 19th September 1944 Captain Queripel was acting as company commander of a composite company composed of men of three parachute battalions.

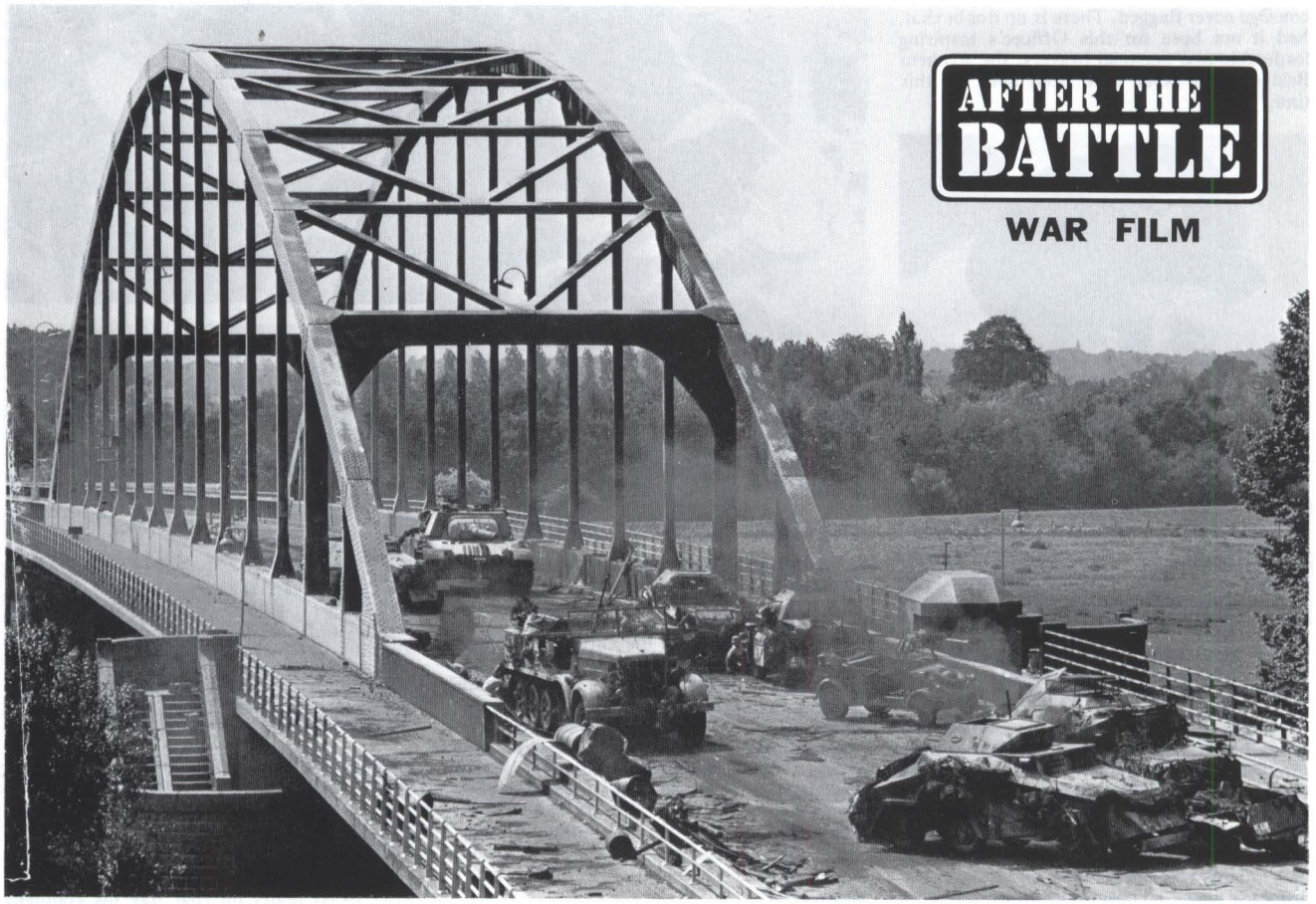
At 14.00 hours on that day his company were advancing along a main road which runs on an embankment towards Arnhem. The advance was conducted under continuous machine-gun fire, which at one period became so heavy that the company became split up on either side of the road and suffered considerable loss. Captain Queripel at once proceeded to reorganise his forces, crossing and recrossing the road whilst doing so under extremely heavy and accurate fire. During this period he carried a wounded sergeant to the Regimental Aid Post under fire and was himself wounded in the face.

Having reorganised his force, Captain Queripel personally led a party of men against a strong point holding up the advance. This strong point consisted of a captured British anti-tank gun, and two machine guns. Despite the extremely heavy fire directed at him, Captain Queripel succeeded in killing the crews of the machine guns and recapturing the anti-tank gun. As a result of this the advance was able to continue.

Later in the same day Captain Queripel found himself cut off with a small party of men and took up a position in a ditch. By this time he had received further wounds in both arms. Regardless of his wounds and the very heavy mortar and Spandau fire, he continued to inspire his men to resist with hand grenades, pistols and the few remaining rifles. On at least one occasion he picked up and threw back at the enemy a stick grenade which had landed in the ditch.

As, however, the enemy pressure increased, Captain Queripel decided that it was impossible to hold the position longer and ordered his men to withdraw. Despite their protests, he insisted on remaining behind to cover their withdrawal with his automatic pistol and a few remaining hand grenades. This is the last occasion on which he was seen.

During the whole of a period of nine hours of confused and bitter fighting Captain Queripel displayed the highest standard of gallantry under most difficult and trying circumstances. His courage, leadership and devotion to duty were an inspiration to all."



The making of A Bridge Too Far

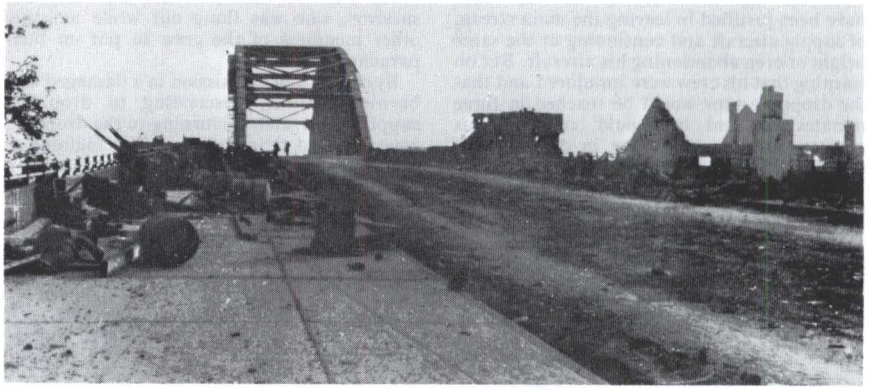
BY COLONEL JOHN WADDY
Joint Military Advisor (British)

Above: **THE FILM. Deventer bridge littered with Charles Mann's vehicles. From L-R: replica Hanomag, Leopard masquerading as a Panther IV, Krauss-Maffei half-track, 6-wheel armoured car, 4-wheel armoured car, genuine Kubelwagen, 6-wheel armoured car with a 4-wheel armoured car behind.**

September 1944 — the month when the five long years of blood, toil, sweat and tears at last seemed about to end. The German armies in western Europe were in almost total collapse and were scurrying back to the burning remains of the Third Reich: only the coup de grace needed to be given — a swift stroke to the heart. Field Marshal Sir Bernard Montgomery saw this at once and pressed for a maximum effort to allow a combined British and American Army to sweep round the German right flank in Holland and pour into the north German plain, around the Ruhr and on, possibly, to Berlin.

It was a bold plan and one which, if it had succeeded, could have finished the war by Christmas. Unfortunately it did not succeed and the final eight months fighting were some of the bloodiest of the war with death for millions on the battlefield and among Hitler's prisoners and, worst of all, it brought the Russians to the centre of Europe. There were many reasons for failure among which political factors rank foremost, but bad generalship, bad weather and bad luck were all equally to blame.

We all know General Eisenhower's fateful decision not to give Montgomery the priority that he requested; instead, only the newly formed Allied Airborne Army was allocated to help him open the door into Germany with Operation 'Market Garden'. At the time the plan was conceived, success was possible even without the full force requested by Mont gomery but the swiftness and the efficiency



Above: **A German photograph of Arnhem bridge as it really was after being cleared of the wreckage from the Gräbner attack (IWM).** *Below:* **The bridge today.**

of the German Army reorganisation on the threshold of their Fatherland was another and equally telling reason for its final failure.

In the combined land and air operation to drive an armoured thrust right through Holland from the Belgium border to the frontiers of Germany beyond Arnhem, the I Airborne Corps — the 'Market' part of the plan — was to be, as Montgomery termed it, 'the airborne carpet', paving the way with the capture of the river and canal bridges from Eindhoven to Arnhem for the 'Garden' part of the plan : the advance northward of the British Second Army, with the XXX Corps, including the famed Guards Armoured Division, on the centre axis, flanked by the VIII and XII Corps.

The three Airborne Divisions (1st British and the 82nd and 101st American) had seven days to plan and prepare for the largest single airborne operation which was to be carried out on September 17. Nine days later, the 2,000 survivors of the British Division withdrew across the Rhine and the leading elements of XXX Corps fell back from the river, within sight of their final goal — the bridge at Arnhem, but without its capture the operation had failed.

Thirty-two years later, after more than a year's planning and preparation, another unit moved across to Holland to make a film about those events for which so many men had set out in such high hopes in 1944. This time the operation lasted 6 months and ended, it is hoped, in success.

Almost before Cornelius Ryan had finished his last book 'A Bridge Too Far', a task which, interspersed with two serious illnesses, took him seven years, Joseph E. Levine, the well-known American producer with 500 films to his credit had started negotiations to buy the film rights of the book. Many books have been written on this operation, and in particular the part played by the British Airborne Division at Arnhem, but Ryan used a wider canvas to give the whole picture from both sides with the developments which led up to the whole operation. Whilst his account of the battle does not add much to the record due most to his journalistic approach it did, on the other hand, give an excellent account of the strategic picture from all sides both within the Allied Command and especially from that of the Germans. It was very sad that, shortly after publication, Cornelius Ryan died of cancer which he had fought so bravely during the research and writing of the book. If he had lived he would undoubtedly have been a strong influence behind the scenes in the making of the film especially as regards the integrity of the story in the script.

Joe Levine wanted the film to be his biggest picture ever with a huge budget of £15 million, and he soon persuaded Sir Richard Attenborough to be the director. Using his own company, Richard Attenborough Productions Ltd., he virtually ran the whole production, although, officially the film was made under the title of Joe E. Levine Presents Inc. (A Bridge Too Far is also the first film in which *After the Battle* magazine has been consulted at an early stage with a meeting in August 1975 with the Associate Producer John Palmer and his staff. The editor was able to advise on the current availability of restored military vehicles resulting in the subsequent appointment of Charlie Mann and his Falmouth team to provide and maintain most of the 100 plus vehicles used in the film. *After the Battle* also advised that Mr. Jan Voskuil, the leading authority on the Arnhem battle with his own extensive archive, should be appointed historical adviser to the film. Ed.)

It was decided that the whole film would be made in the Netherlands for the prime reason of bringing authenticity to the film and, during 1975, Richard Attenborough and some of his staff carried out wide reconnaissances in Holland in order to find, first and foremost, a bridge to represent that 'Bridge Too Far'. It was not possible to use Arnhem bridge itself because there is so much new construction on both sides replacing the utter devastation caused during the battle; furthermore, Arnhem is such an important traffic junction through Holland that it would not have been practicable to close the bridge for even one hour without causing traffic jams half-way across Holland.

After a thorough search, the choice fell upon the little town of Deventer, 35 kms north of Arnhem. There, the bridge over the River IJssel was ideal — it was almost the right length and width and the construction was very similar including the cycle tracks on either side; furthermore, except for one block of flats, there were no new buildings around each end and the surrounding area looked almost as if time had stood still since 1944. A large car park around the bridge ramp was also ideally situated for the building of the

Above: **The breakout as it really was, photographed by Sergeant Jones. The Irish Guards pass the Belgian/Dutch frontier on the N15 after crossing 'Joe's Bridge' (IWM).** *Below:* **The only danger today is from the customs officials!**

Below: **THE FILM. XXX Corps 'breakout' along two miles of Dutch Army tank training ground at Amersfoort — much to the annoyance of the new tank trainees! (Photo by Alan Tomkins, Joint Art Director).**

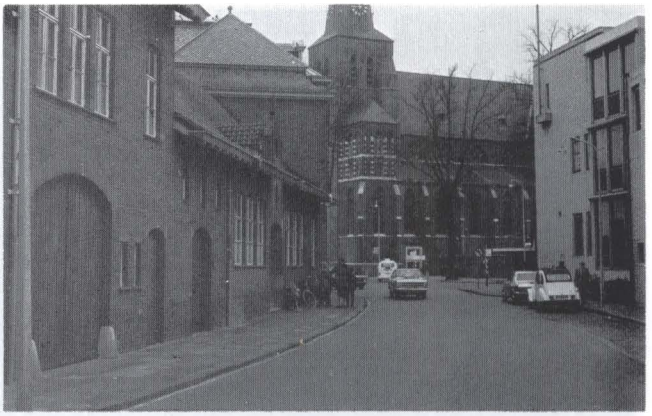
The advance in 1944. *Above:* **Soldiers of the 1/5 Welch Infantry Regiment, 53rd Division, photographed by Sergeant Watkins on September 20 passing St. Bernardus dairy in Bergeyk (IWM).**

Above: **The windmill was demolished in 1950 and the whole complex, including the mill now belongs to Zuid Nederlandse Melkindustrie B.V.**

Left and above: **British armour presses on through the main square of Valkenswaard (on the N15), photographed by Sergeant Midgley on September 18 (IWM).**

Left and above: **A Sherman of the 11th Armoured Division photographed in Leende by Sergeant Jones on September 22 (IWM).**

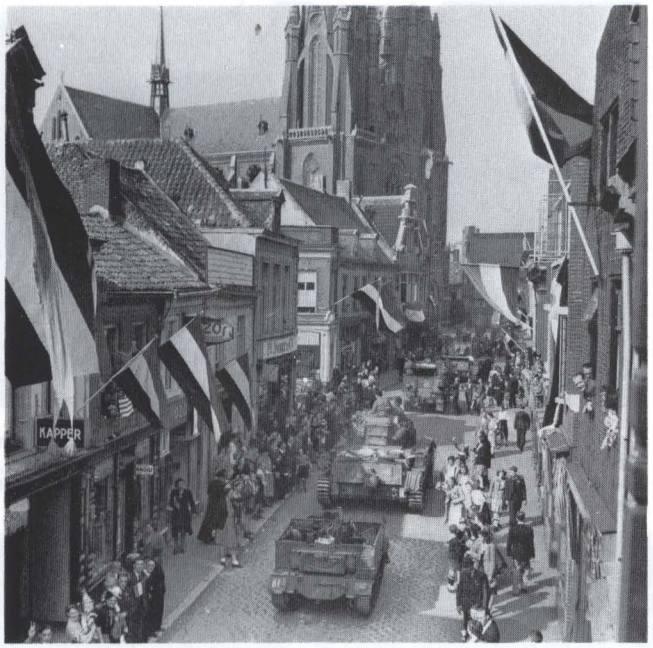
Left: **Armour presses on through Veghel, en route to Nijmegen.** *Above:* **Today, the original lettering is still just visible on the wall of the Hotel Tilesen.**



Left and above: On September 24, an 11th Armoured Division column entered Deurne, west of Helmond. There, on the 25th, Sergeant Jones photographed Shermans halted in Martinet Straat in the shadows of St. Willibrorduskerk (IWM).

THE FILM. Lieut.-Col. 'Joe' Vandeleur (Michael Caine) and Lieut.-Gen. Brian Horrocks (Edward Fox) inspect the Irish Guards.

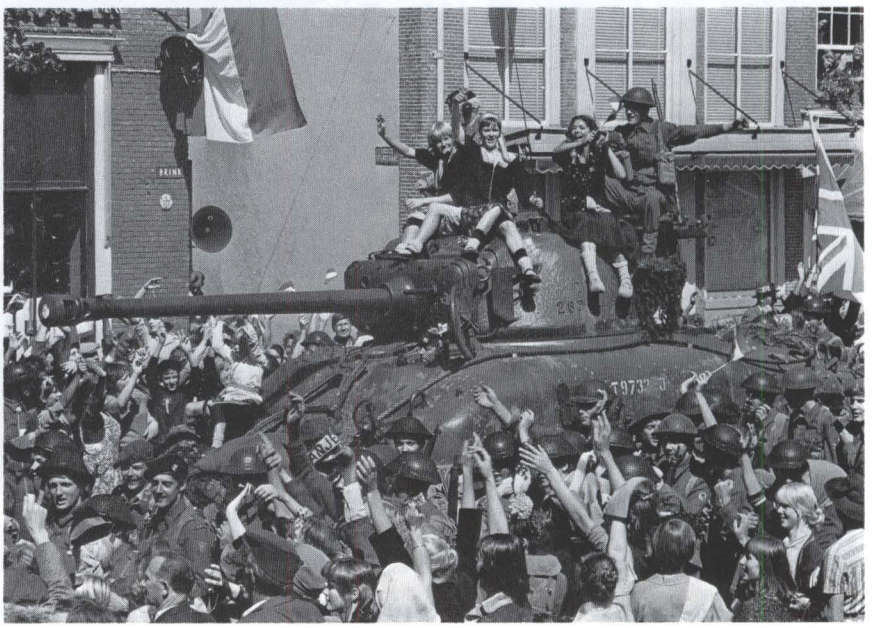
Above: As tanks of the 29th Armoured Brigade, 11th Armoured Division, arrived in Helmond, citizens were photographed leaving the town by Sergeant Lawson on September 22, 1944 (IWM). *Right:* Mierloseweg, Helmond, photographed in April 1977.



eight houses needed to represent those in Arnhem in which Lieutenant-Colonel Frost's battalion held out for four days. Deventer — a delightful old fashioned walled town — was perfect in other respects for the making of the film and it became the headquarters and main base of the company during its long stint on location, being nicknamed the film city of Holland. Deventer had fallen prey to the current economic situation and many of the light industries, which had been introduced to the area after the war, had been closed down giving ample empty factory space to house the props departments.

Late in 1975, the advance party of 'the unit', as it came to be known, moved over to Deventer to establish the base and, in particular, to start building the many props, the biggest of which were the houses around the bridge and the gliders, tanks and guns. Factories and offices were taken over under the control of Terence Marsh, the Production Designer, and his large team of artists, draughtsmen, carpenters and plasterers (with an appropriate logistic staff) started work. Terry Marsh also spent many days driving round the countryside to find suitable locations for the various scenes — German HQs, the site for Oosterbeek church (to be built as a set), river crossing areas, dike roads, houses to represent HQs in England and so on. This was a long task in itself but even more difficult were the negotiations needed to hire the locations and where necessary obtain permission for areas, roads and even rivers to be closed for periods lasting a few hours to

Above left: **The Irish Guards advance north through Eindhoven bedecked with Dutch national flags. Picture by Sergeant Midgley on September 19 (IWM).** *Above right:* **The same view of Stratumseind, thirty-three years later, from the balcony of the Phoenix Cafe — now sporting the Stars and Stripes!** *Below:* **THE FILM. The Brink, or square, of Deventer, doubling as Eindhoven, with 1,200 Dutch extras playing both an enthusiastic crowd and also Irish Guardsmen!**



Stratumseind runs into Rechte Straat where Captain Malendine photographed these Dutch nurses waving a greeting (IWM).

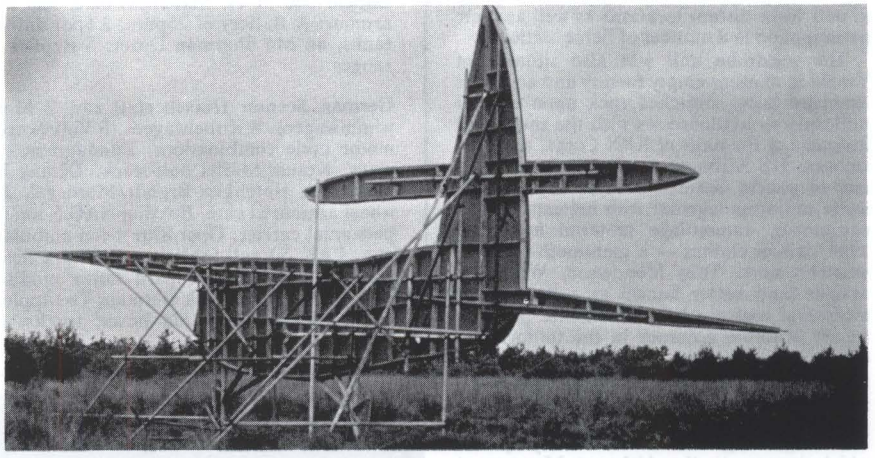
No driving up Rechte Straat today which has now been converted into a pedestrian shopping precinct.

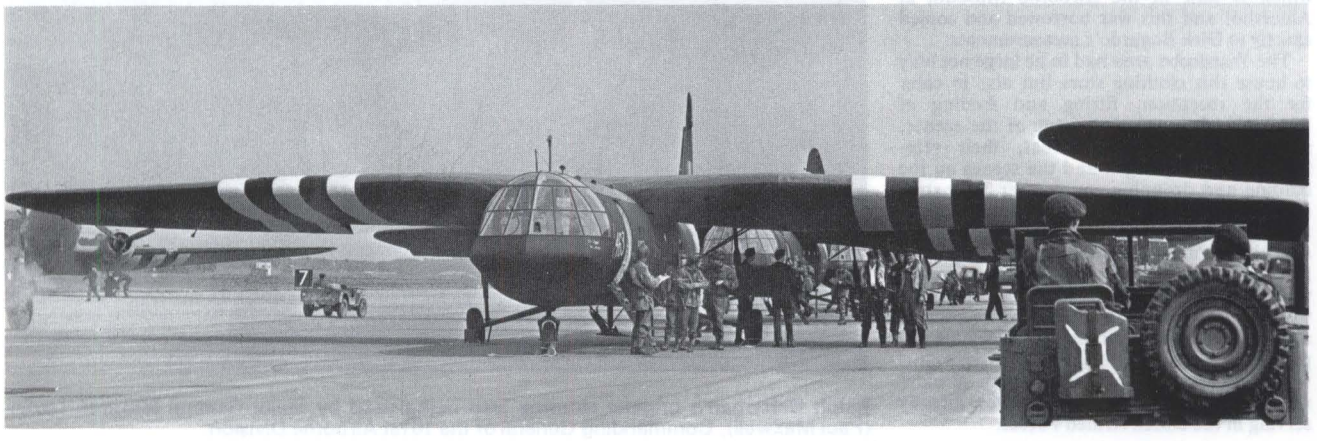
several weeks. Deventer Bridge was taken over for two weeks to film the battle on the bridge, which included blowing up armoured vehicles, an ammunition dump and even burning the superstructure. Deventer car park was rented for more than five months at a cost of £70,000. On several occasions Nijmegen Bridge, one of the largest in Europe, was taken over for periods of a few hours which included stopping the never-ending river traffic on the Waal.

Also during 1975 the script was being written by William Goldman of New York and, as everyone knows, this is the foundation on which the whole film depends. Just as the book was based on the actual operation, the script used the book as a basis. On the whole, it is fairly accurate but obviously, for various reasons connected with the world of films, some liberties have been taken with history. Some of these are minor and excusable such as amalgamating several characters and a number of incidents into one individual or one action but there are other occasions in which incidents have been enlarged or altered merely to give a specific actor a better part in keeping with his image. It must be remembered, however, that the film does not set out to be a documentary — it is a dramatic portrayal of an event in history. Before the script was finalised the director talked to a number of the leading personalities who took part in the battle, and after these discussions, some alterations were made.

Soon after the Unit Advance Party started their work the main construction force of about 70 carpenters, painters, riggers and plasterers moved into the empty factories of Deventer to start building the indoor sets, including a Dakota and a Horsa glider for interior shots. The three biggest tasks were to

Top: **Scriptwriter William Goldman in one of the Deventer factories making the six Horsa gliders.** *Above:* **One of the gliders dispersed on the dropping zone . . . or is it?** *Below:* **The truth!** *Bottom:* **Ready for filming at Deelen airbase.**





build the eight houses on the Deventer car park by the bridge, a country house and church representing Oosterbeek in Bronkhorst village, some 20 kms south of Deventer, and six, full-size Horsa gliders. Other jobs included refacing a burnt-out country house in a park outside the town to represent the Hartenstein Hotel, HQ of British Airborne Division; fabrication of plastic mouldings of Sherman tanks to be mounted on long wheelbase Land-Rover chassis'; German guns and sentry boxes; a large water tank for river crossing close-ups by the River IJssel ten miles downstream and a Dutch canal bridge.

Meanwhile, Major John Larminie, the tank specialist, was scouring Europe for running Shermans, spare parts and engines all of which had to be brought to Deventer for repair and refurbishing. In the end, Major Larminie tracked down nine useable Shermans. The Dutch Army provided a 105mm Howitzer version, which was suitably transformed into a Firefly, and a 'Dozer Sherman, minus turret, which appears in the film with the addition of a plastic turret. In addition, the Dutch provided two towable hulks.

Of the five Shermans obtained from Belgian sources, two 'gate guardians' (one Firefly and one 105mm) came from the Ecole de Troupes Blindées at Arlon and another Firefly from a cabbage patch behind the Royal Army Museum in Brussels. The other two were more modern 76mm versions. All the XXX Corps armour, real and plastic, was crewed for the filming by army personnel on leave from Bovington and the Rhine Army.

The majority of other vehicles were provided by Charlie Mann and his Military Vehicle museum, the 1939/45 Group and Bapty and Co., and a British Rail ferry was chartered to transport the vehicles from Falmouth to Holland. A workshop was set up in the nearby village of Twello, where these vehicles and the Shermans were maintained, painted with the correct colours and insignia and also repaired; the latter being a major task bearing in mind the many miles travelling to and from distant locations as well as their participation in a number of fierce 'actions'.

The wardrobe unit was also situated at Twello in another empty factory and across its extensive floors stretched rack upon rack of uniforms — battledresses with the ranks and insignias of the units of XXX Corps, airborne smocks, US Airborne combat jackets, boots and of course German Army, SS and Luftwaffe uniforms together with helmets, sets of equipment, camouflage material and even 1944 civilian clothes — a mammoth quartermaster's store. Tony Mendelson, Wardrobe Master (and better known as a designer of mediaeval costumes) took immense pains to ensure absolute accuracy in the uniforms of the principal actors — correct badges of ranks, medal ribbons, type of materials and personal idiosyncracies. For example, the I Airborne Corps Commander, General 'Boy' Browning, designed his own RFC-style jacket which is now in the Airborne Museum at Aldershot and this was borrowed and copied exactly to Dirk Bogarde's measurements.

The Wardrobe area had to be large not only to house this clothing store but also to cater for the reception, fitting and feeding of hundreds of extras. For some of the scenes, such as the German retreat, their reinforcement of Nijmegen and the scenes on the landing and dropping zones, over 500 extras at a time were used. This entailed their arrival at Twello before midnight followed by fitting and kitting out with feeding and transport to locations often 40-50 miles distant. Filming would proceed until late evening and then the weary extras would start the reverse process although with the additional and welcome pay parade at the end. The majority of the extras were Dutch youths with a leavening of older men most of whom had served or were already serving in the Dutch Armed Forces.

Colonel John Waddy, Joint Military Advisor and author for our story, (who parachuted into DZ Y on Ginkelsche Heide on September 18, 1944) pictured with Charlie Mann.

THE VEHICLES USED

Compiled by Charlie Mann, Military Vehicle Museum Ltd., Lamanva, Nr. Falmouth, Cornwall

American scenes: Twenty Jeeps (repainted for British scenes when required), 6 Jeep trailers, an Airborne trailer, 2 Para cart/trailers, 3 Jeeps (expendable), a Dodge Command car, 3 Dodge weapon carriers, Dodge Ambulance, 2 GMC 6x6s, Chevrolet 1½-tonner, Dodge Recovery Vehicle, Diamond T wrecker, Clark airfield tractor, Plymouth Sedan staff car and 2 Harley Davidson motor cycles.

British Scenes: Five Bren Gun carriers, T16 carrier, 7 International half-tracks, White Scout car, 2 Humber armoured cars, Daimler armoured car, 4 Daimler Scout cars, 2 Scammell heavy recovery vehicles, Ford WOT 6 3-tonner, Bedford QL Trooper, 2 Bedford QL GS Trucks, Bedford QL (expendable), Bedford MWD Infantry Truck, Morris 15cwt CS 8, Austin K2 Civil Defence Vehicle, 2 Austin K2 ambulances, Bedford OYC Bowser, Dodge D15 water tanker, Chevrolet C 8 A/1C5, Humber heavy utility, Bedford OY NAAFI tea-van body, Humber staff car, 3 BSA M20 motor cycles, 2 Royal Enfield 350 m/cs, Matchless m/c, and one Welbike (Brockhouse) m/c. Artillery and armour: A Battery of 25pdrs, 3 6pdr anti-tank guns, 2 Bofors AA guns, 8 M4 Sherman tanks, an M4 Sherman Dozer, 5 Replica Sherman tanks and several tank hulks — ex ranges

German Scenes: Horsch staff car, 2 Mercedes staff cars, Citroen staff car, 2 Schwimmwagens, 4 Kubelwagens, 5 Volkswagen/Kubel replicas, a Kettenkraftrad, 3 BMW motor cycle combinations, Zundapp m/c combination, BMW solo m/c, 2 Zundapp m/cs, Krauss-Maffei half-track, Demag half-track, Hanomag replica, Hanomag (expendable), Hotchkiss Brandt/Marder 2, 2 replica 6-wheel armoured cars, 2 replica 4-wheel armoured cars, Bussing-NAG 5-ton truck, German Ford 3-ton truck, Auto Union personnel carrier, Opel Blitz 1-ton ambulance. Artillery and armour: PAK 35 anti-tank gun, PAK 50 anti-tank gun, 2 80mm field-guns, 3 80mm guns (replica), Nebelwerfer rocket-launcher, 4 Leopard tanks modified to Panther IVs, 4 AMX self-propelled guns—modified to look German. To supplement the vehicles listed in the German retreat scenes, a number of old buses, trucks, carts, etc, were obtained from collectors in Holland.

Ralph Berryman's original airborne jeep being used by Major-General Maxwell Taylor (Paul Maxwell), Commanding General of the 101st Airborne Division.

The issuing and collection of weapons was also a long procedure as the Dutch Police rightly took the security of arms very seriously and, if organisation had been lax, a considerable number of weapons could have disappeared and ended up in the wrong hands. Bapty & Co., the well-known arms providers for the film world, produced a huge furniture van-cum-armoury and workshop to provide all the weapons required from .38 pistols, rifles, carbines to 3-in. mortars, bazookas and Vickers machine guns. Most of these were fully-working models, able to fire blank ammunition, but there were also dummies, which could be used by background extras.

This mobile armoury, under the expert eye of Bill Aylmore (ex-50th Regiment), moved around Holland with a strong police escort, which kept an eye on the issue and collection of all weapons. Each weapon was signed out on a proper form giving the serial number. It was due to Bill Aylmore's hard work and Army training that not one weapon was lost; remarkable under the circumstances when it was quite usual for some 500 weapons, some with ammunition, to be issued, often in the dark, and then received back late in the evening when everyone was tired, irritable and eager to get home.

Sgt. Bill Aylmore also excelled himself during the filming of the battle on the bridge by being the ace shot with the PIAT. During all the various takes he was able to put the bomb exactly where the director wanted it and where it coincided with the special effects explosion.

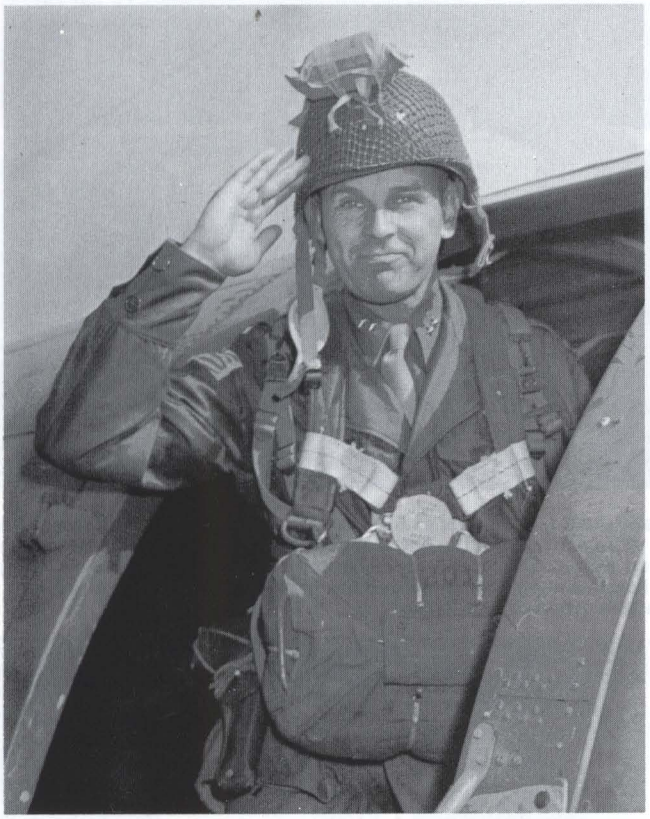
The Special Effects team, under Johnny Richardson, were also making their preparations including bringing over the various ingredients for the explosions, bullet hits and fires. Deventer bridge had to be fitted with gas pipes running along the girders to simulate the paintwork burning after the explosion of the ammunition dump on the bridge and guns had to be modified so that they gave the appearance of firing; for example, a German 50mm anti-tank gun could fire a blank round and, using air pressure from a gas cylinder, the mechanism was made to recoil and eject the spent case.

Also during this preparatory stage, two other important matters were being planned — the production schedule and the casting of actors for the parts, each depending upon the other. The actors were selected and contracted for differing periods of time with the result that the particular actors' scenes had to be filmed irrespective of their sequence in the film. This led to the apparent anomaly of filming scenes depicting the end of the battle before it had even started, although, by and large, the sequence was in order. In many cases it had to be because there was no point in building scenery and wrecking it to produce battle damage effect only to rebuild it to show it in its proper state before the battle began. The only occasion when this had to be done was on the British glider zones, when the six brand-new gliders had to be taken out to the heathland location and dispersed in their landing positions with their tails dropped off to allow the unloading to take place. Afterwards, the gliders had to be transported on low-loaders to the Dutch airbase at Deelen, north of Arnhem, to be assembled and lined up for the loading and take-off scenes in England. It was a mammoth task to co-ordinate the production schedule combining the actors' programmes with the already complicated jig-saw of fitting in the scenes with the hiring of the location areas — houses, woods, heaths or town streets and squares, together with the availability, in many cases, of the equipment — tanks, aircraft, vehicles, boats, etc.

A large number of well-known film stars were chosen to play the parts of the prominent men and one woman. Naturally it adds to the box-office draw to include well-known actors but it also assists the audience to recognise the wide cast of characters as they appear during the action. Sean Connery portrays Major-General Urquhart in almost the star role as his personality is the strongest of all the main characters and he is in the film from beginning to end. Other major parts are played by Anthony Hopkins as Lieutenant-Colonel John Frost; Edward Fox as Lieutenant-General Brian Horrocks; Dirk Bogarde as Lieutenant-General 'Boy' Browning; Ryan O'Neal as Brigadier-General Jim Gavin; Robert Redford

Above: **THE FILM. David Anker, a member of APA, portrays Corporal Taffy Brace of the RAMC, who played a prominent part in the battle at the Hartenstein Hotel. Picture taken outside the armoury van with ex-Corporal Andy Millborne in the position he was in when hit when he lost both hands and an eye. He visited the filming with the real Taffy Brace, who had helped him in 1944 when he was injured.**

Above: **Real Bren Gunners at the ready beside No. 169 Mierloseweg, the Raaymakers Houthandel, in Helmond.** *Below:* **We found that the same corner is now used for Dutch doggies delight and relief!**



Left: **Major-General Maxwell Taylor, boards his aircraft at Welford airfield for his parachute drop north-west of Son with the 502nd Parachute Infantry Regiment (US Army).** *Above:* **THE FILM. Sir Richard Attenborough specifically matched up this shot of Paul Maxwell, 'keeping that Eagle Screaming', at Deelen Airfield.**

as Major Julian Cook; Gene Hackman as Major-General Stanislaw Sosabowski; Elliott Gould as Colonel Bobby Stout; Michael Caine as Lieutenant-Colonel 'Joe' Vandeleur; James Caan as Staff-Sergeant Eddie Dohun; Maximilian Schell as General der Infanterie Wilhelm Bittrich; Hardy Kruger as an amalgamated SS-Obergruppenführer und General der Waffen SS Ludwig; Laurence Olivier as an imaginary Dutch doctor, representing all that gallant band who helped the British Division and Liv Ullman as Mrs. Kate ter Horst, the almost-mythical heroine, whose house became a hospital in the fore-front of the battle. Except for the last two, all the other actors, including a Dutch resistance man and his son, speak their own language with the appropriate sub-titles, and this adds more realism to the story.

A host of other actors play lesser speaking parts of all four nations and some represent actual characters, such as Corporal Taffy Brace RAMC, Brigadier Gerald Lathbury, while others are imaginary officers and NCOs. To play the part of Frost's men at the bridge Richard Attenborough carried out an interesting and successful experiment: he selected some 50 young actors to become these men of the airborne force. For union reasons it was not possible to use serving soldiers and, furthermore, although they would be better soldiers, they might not be able to act or speak as such in front of the cameras. Extras could have been used but both their soldierly and acting ability would have been marginal, so it was decided it would be easier to turn actors into the semblance of soldiers rather than the reverse. Some 300 were interviewed and 50 finally selected and many could say that they almost became the stars of the film. Their high value soon became apparent and their stay was prolonged as, in turn, they became American and German soldiers taking part in a variety of different actions and on some occasions, they were used as Section Commanders in charge of groups of Dutch extras in crowd scenes.

The original intention was to have them trained at the Parachute Regiment Depot for a week to give them a grounding in weapon handling, battle tactics and physical fitness.

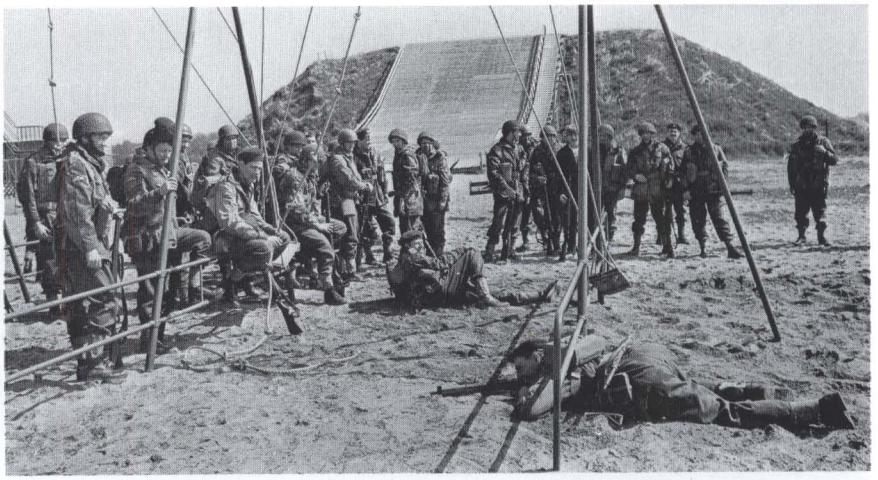
The actors meet the real stars. *Above:* **Sean Connery with Major-General Roy Urquhart and** *(below)* **Anthony Hopkins and Lieutenant-Colonel (later Major-General) John Frost.**

However, this did not materialise and they arrived at Deventer with the appearance of all recruits, although, the few ex-soldiers and marines could at once be spotted by their soldierly bearing. As the British Military Adviser, I was understandably shocked at seeing this bunch of actors portraying men of my own Regiment. However, with the help of the ex-soldier actors and other ex-Servicemen in the unit, they soon started to look and act the part and much of the credit for this must go to the actors themselves who soon became known as the APA — Attenborough's Private Army. Their morale and standard of performance were an example to the whole unit and they lived almost as soldiers in an old building previously occupied by the old folk of the town. Nevertheless, it was still necessary to use serving soldiers in scenes where special skills were required and service personnel from five different countries took part. The largest contingent of 350 men came from the 1st Battalion. The Parachute Regiment who took part in the scenes depicting the parachute landings of the British, American and Polish troops. Some 30 RAF Officers and men were responsible for aircrew training and safety and for the paratroop training and despatch. There was also a small supply drop section of the RCT and 50 Belgian Para Commandos did two descents in a day for an 82nd Airborne drop.

Eight of the C47 Dakota aircraft were on hire from the Danish and Finnish Air Forces complete with crews. The Dutch Army, being largely a conscript force, were reluctant to allow their troops to be used, particularly in scenes where they would be plainly visible, and this was not on account of their ultra-long hair! However, the Dutch did provide both the tanks and crews to represent German and British armour on several occasions and Leopard and AMX tanks took the part of German Panthers and SP guns in the battles around Arnhem bridge and in Nijmegen. They underwent some changes to the outline with foliage added as extra camouflage but naturally they will be obvious to anyone trained in tank recognition. On one occasion, a squadron of each was used in the background to give weight to the appearance of XXX Corps armour awaiting the order to break out across the Belgian/Dutch border. Also an Engineer Squadron of the Royal Netherlands Army was used to help build a Bailey bridge over a canal but, unfortunately, due to hair-cutting problems, only a few actually appear in the film and these were the officers, WOs and NCOs. The ubiquitous APA and some of the more experienced extras quickly took their place to become instant sappers for the night.

If it is true that an army marches on its stomach, then it applies equally to a film unit. The feeding of all the people involved was another major task as on any day there might be up to 1,200 men and women to be catered for in some five or six different locations. The standard of messing run by Phil Hobbs was excellent throughout the six month period and contributed a lot to the unit's high morale and ability to work hard. For night filming a continuous hot buffet kept everyone well fed. On a number of nights there were several hundred actors, extras and stunt men soaked to the skin during filming of such scenes as the Polish attempt to cross the river and the final withdrawal of the British Airborne over the Rhine in pouring rain, all being revived periodically during the night by the catering unit with liberal tots of whisky and brandy.

The other essential logistic requirement — transport — was also extensive and efficient and each department, cameras, lighting, props, special effects and armoury all had their own vans and could be seen heading out in long convoys each morning to locations out in the country. Other cars and light vans were hired for other departments and individuals. A local taxi firm was virtually taken over for



Above: **The APA, soon after it arrived, doing some real training at a holiday camp outside Deventer to try to make them look like soldiers.** *Below:* **The 'Commanding General', Sir Richard Attenborough, reviews his troops.**

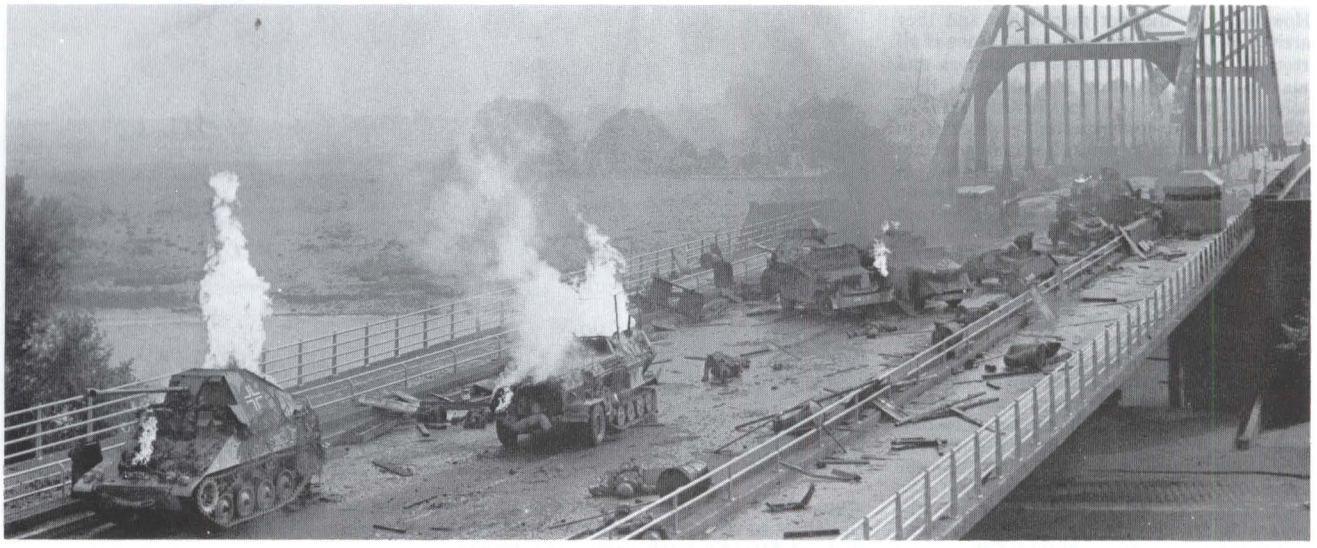
use mainly on the run to Amsterdam fetching and carrying actors to and from the airport. A regular fast run was also set up to rush each day's film to the airport to be flown to the studios near London for processing. This film or rushes would then be collected the following day to be viewed in the makeshift theatre in the evening. It was said that this taxi firm made itself a fortune. Indeed, in addition to the direct amount paid to Deventer and other persons for hire or rent of locations and facilities (such as fire appliances, police and ambulance services), there was a huge boost to the local economy from the living expenses of the unit members. Accommodation was provided by the company in and around Deventer and varied from hotels, motels, hostels, lodging rooms, suburban houses and caravan parks. All in all it was reckoned that some £8 million was injected into the local economy. Bearing in mind the long hot summer, public houses and restaurants in the area did a roaring trade, particularly in the sale of cold beer and many bars were quickly persuaded to obtain pint tankards in place of the usual Continental, toothmug-size glasses.

By mid-April most of the planning and preparation had been finished and the majority of the construction work was completed or well in hand and the second Operation Market Garden was ready to start: D-Day was to be Monday, April 26 and during that weekend the remainder of the main body flew over to Holland.

Monday was a bright clear spring morning and, as the sun rose, the back streets of old Deventer began to fill with disorganized German troops, civilians in old clothing of the war period, trucks, vans, lights, cables and, shortly after nine o-clock, the first orders were given for 'Action'. The longest and most intensive period of 'on location' filming had started and this was not to end until mid-October, including most Saturdays and often some Sundays too.

The Unit was organized for its work in a similar manner to Army units. Periodic schedules were issued, weekly schedules and then daily orders or 'The Unit Call' as it was termed, which was issued during the late afternoon for the next day's 'shooting'.

The locations used were many and varied. Deventer of course, was the main area, not only for the Unit HQ but also for the interior studio shots and other outside locations. Deventer bridge underwent two periods of closure to allow filming of the bridge battle scenes. During the first period in May, the bridge was littered for over a week with rubble, burnt timber and wrecked German vehicles and throughout the day black oily smoke from burning tyres drifted over the actors and crew; unfortunately this smoke also covered half of the town and marred the usually immaculate Dutch houses. The inhabitants soon became used to the sounds of battle in their midst and for a time Deventer attracted many visitors from all over the country who came to watch the activity, although 'activity' is not always an accurate description of a film company's work to the

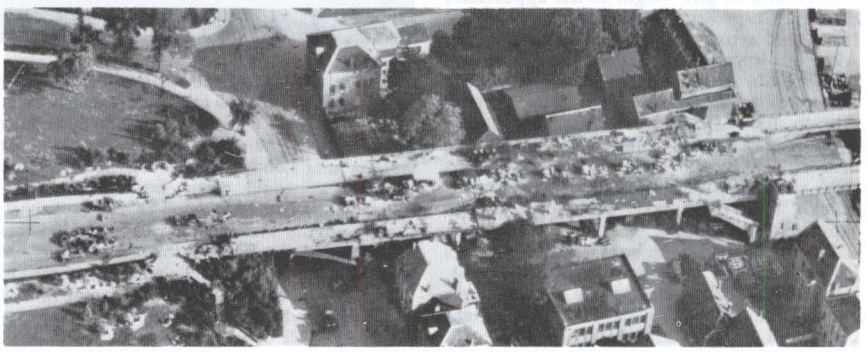


outsider. Many hours are spent in setting up the scenery or even breaking it up, in laying the demolition charges, installing the lighting and cameras — overhead, on the road, in the vehicles or through windows. Then, as in war, there are short moments of intense action with explosions, firing, smoke and flames and hand-to-hand fighting to be quickly terminated by the curt order, 'Cut!'. The actors then go back to their caravans and the extras, some made up with ghastly wounds, collapse onto the pavements to talk and smoke, fraternise with the spectators or slake their thirst with cold Dutch beer. The unit technicians meanwhile are more than busy repeating the same lengthy business of setting up once more for the next take. SS-Hauptsturmführer Gräbner with his SS Reconaissance Battalion must have thundered across Deventer Bridge more than a dozen times and he himself suffered his fiery death at least six times over.

Gräbner's charge, frightening on the screen in its seeming fiery, impetuous brutality, was a carefully staged affair. The sketch artist, Michael White, had planned each stage and each incident on an overall chart, which was then translated onto the separate sketches of the story board. The whole scene was first rehearsed on a marked-out area at the back of the factory at Twello where all the 20 armoured cars, scout cars, half-tracks and Kubelwagens taking part were based. The drivers, from what came to be known as Charlie Mann's Squadron, together with the unit stunt crew and a bunch of tough Dutch stunt men all under Alf Joint (who later broke a shoulder 'falling off' a roof), practised each individual move over the bridge.

This charge, repeated many times over during a week's filming, was a spectacular event. Each time the vehicles with their SS infantry crews, were lined up on the reverse side of the bridge while the waiting British Paratroopers, played by the keen APA, waited at windows and on rooftops, weapons at the ready. With the lighting set and the cameras in position the spectators were shepherded by the patient Dutch police into safety and all inhabitants in the overlooking block of flats took cover inside their homes. Following shouts of, 'Quiet everywhere!', on the command from the Assistant Director, David Tomblin, 'Come ahead! Come ahead!' the mad charge was let loose on Deventer and its inhabitants. Major-General John Frost watching it from the roof top of the house acting as his HQ said, 'It was better than the real thing!' Undoubtedly, this three minute scene, brilliantly edited by the unit editor Tony Gibbs, is the high point of the whole film. A rough cut was quickly made and Joe Levine took it to the USA to help sell his film to the waiting distributors.

Above: **THE FILM. The Gräbner attack filmed on the bridge across the IJssel at Deventer. Charlie Mann's Hotchkiss Brandt/Marder and the Hanomag replica sprout calor-gas flames.** *Below:* **David Tomblin, Assistant Director, on the rostrum directs the attack with the Stunt Arranger, Alf Joint.**

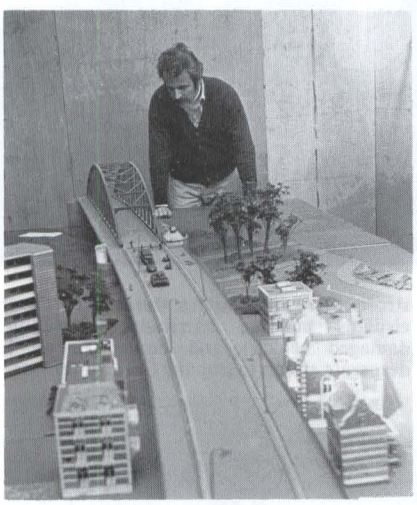


Above: **Wreckage from the real attack of the Aufklärungsbatallion of the 9. SS Panzerdivision 'Hohenstauffen' commanded by SS-Hauptsturmführer Viktor-Eberhard Gräbner who died in the attack on September 18. He was buried at Arnhem but when the German dead were moved to Ysselsteyn Soldatenfriedhof after the war, his remains could not be identified (IWM).** *Below:* **The bridge today.**

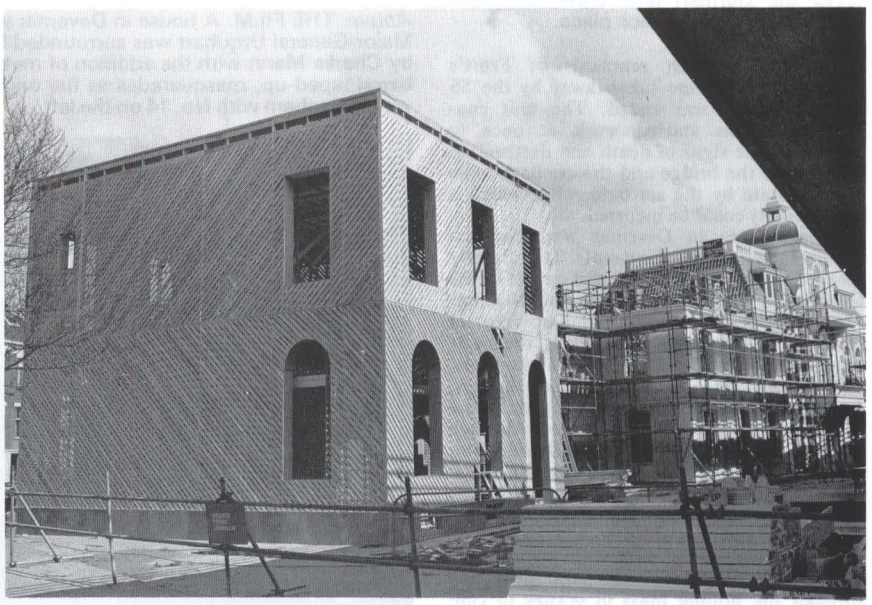
THE FILM. *Above:* **Geoffrey Unsworth, Director of Photography, watches as two APA soldiers get ready with a mock-up flame-thrower (which fired paraffin about 15 yards) for the attack on the pillbox. The flame misses, hitting instead some wooden ammunition huts which explode setting alight the paintwork on the bridge — rather falsely portrayed** *(above)* **using piped calor-gas.**

Deventer was also given three nights of firework displays — first, when the scene was shot in which a flame-thrower misses a German pill box and instead hits several wooden huts, supposedly filled with explosives. In 1944, the explosion set fire to the paintwork on the girders of the bridge and the recreation entailed a lengthy process of cladding the girders with asbestos and installing gas pipes along them over the great arch. The final cleaning up and repainting of the smoke-blackened bridge was a long and tedious job.

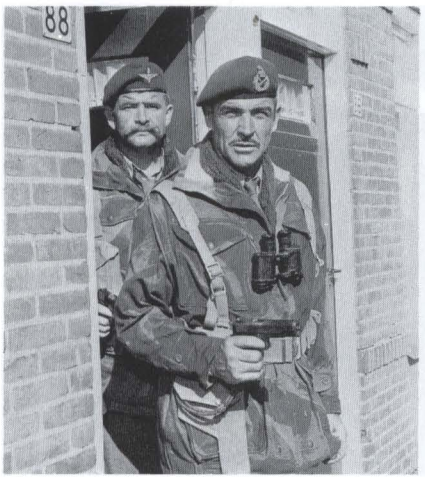
The eight houses built on the car park on either side of the northern ramp were a great achievement and attracted many visitors. The art department had constructed models of the whole bridge area in both its original state and in various damaged conditions as the battle progressed — after Gräbner's charge, the attack by German tanks and the final destruction by SS Infantry and SP guns. The immaculate houses were systematically pock-marked, holed and burned and, on one day, a real fire in the main house (soon brought under control by the ever-ready Deventer firemen) added realism. On another occasion, in the final bridge battle scene, a Dutch Army Leopard tank, representing a Tiger, turned too sharply over a pile of rubble and ploughed through a corner of one house bringing it down in a realistic manner.



The model of Deventer bridge built by the Art Department to plan the progressive destruction of the houses. On the left, the modern block of flats which caused a great problem during the filming on the bridge.



Above: **Six houses were constructed on the car park adjoining the Deventer bridge. The one on the right was used as John Frost's HQ during the filming although his real headquarters building in 1944 was about a hundred yards away from the bridge.** *Below:* **The dramatic scene from the film as a Dutch Army Leopard tank demolishes one of the houses by mistake.**



THE FILM. The General (Sean Connery) emerges from No. 88 (should be No. 14) after a patrol of the South Staffords attacks the German tank crew, an event which never actually took place.

Above: **THE FILM. A house in Deventer was used to represent the one in Arnhem where Major-General Urquhart was surrounded by German troops. A Dutch Leopard, disguised by Charlie Mann with the addition of metal sheeting and with the fume extractor on the barrel taped-up, masquerades as the original German SP gun.** *Below:* **The real Zwarteweg in Arnhem with No. 14 on the left.**

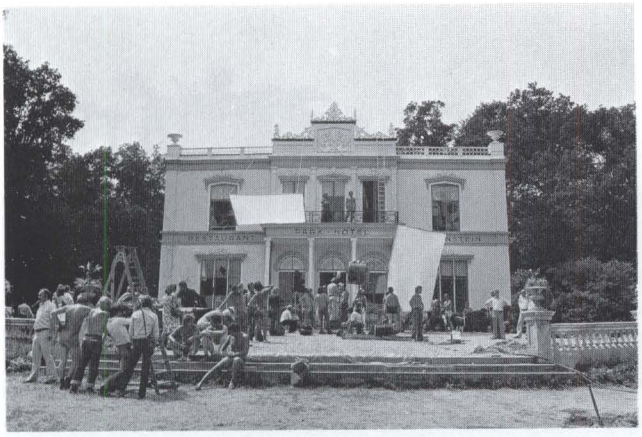
In June, the last remnants of Frost's 'wounded' men were taken away by the SS and Deventer's war ended. The unit construction teams started work at once to remove all the signs of death and destruction and restore the bridge and the car park to its original state by the set date, after which a hefty penalty could be incurred.

Other scenes in Deventer were far less damaging. Major-General Urquhart's escapade, when surrounded and cut off by the Germans in Arnhem's western suburbs, was filmed in a remarkably similar area of Deventer. On two separate Sundays, the lovely town square with its wide market-place, surrounded by trees and old houses, represented Bourg Leopold in Belgium where Lieutenant-General Horrocks drove through rows of parked jeeps to brief all the Commanding Officers of his Corps in a cinema on the forthcoming operation. Later, on a very hot Sunday morning, the square became Eindhoven and was filled with 1,200 Dutch civilian extras going wild with joy as 'Joe' Vandeleur's Sherman tanks push their way through the milling mass of orange to continue their advance up 'Hell's Highway' — the one single road to the north. A number of the Dutch people playing the part of Eindhoven's population had themselves felt the joy of liberation in 1944 and threw themselves nostalgically into the part.

On three occasions Deventer had to suffer ordeal by fire. Two scenes depict the senior British Airborne doctor and a Dutch doctor (played by Laurence Olivier) being taken to the German SS HQ through the devastated streets of Arnhem and a third shows Dutch civilians building barricades of rubble, damaged vehicles and human bodies in desperate efforts to stop the German armour.

As it was in 1944. On September 29, Sergeant Gee photographed transport moving north out of Eindhoven along Hell's Highway passing the mill of P. van der Linden (IWM).

Alas, today the road north out of Eindhoven has been completely altered. The mill, which was demolished in the 1960s, stood on Vlokhovense Weg. Two trees mark the original line of the road.



THE FILM. *Above:* **The Hartenstein Hotel at Oosterbeek was actually the burnt-out shell of a country house near Deventer refaced by the film company complete with plaster balustrade.**

Above: **Extras being positioned for one of the final scenes by assistant director Roy Button, after the hotel had been realistically 'damaged' by the Art Department.**

The other main location was on the outskirts of Deventer — the fire-blackened ruin of a lovely Dutch country house standing in its own grounds of some 20 acres. The house had been empty and had been gutted by a fire started by hippy squatters; Deventer city had taken it over and leased the house and grounds to the film company for the summer, after which, it was rumoured, it was to become a crematorium.

The unit repaired the facade of the house to give it a vague resemblance to the Hartenstein Hotel at Oosterbeek. The hall and the main dining room were also given a new look but the rest remained a burnt-out shell and indeed, by the time filming had ended, the whole house was in the same state.

This house is first used as Generalfeldmarschall Model's HQ at the time of the landing (this artistic licence stretched history by some 300 yards to Model's real HQ — the Tafelberg Hotel). Numerous scenes were shot in the house and grounds depicting the worsening situation of the Airborne division. The film concentrates on this house to the extent that the audience may get the impression that the fighting at Oosterbeek took place only in this small area as there is no effort to depict the 1,000 yard wide perimeter based on the river by Oosterbeek church. Similarly, the plight of the wounded in the various hotels and houses on the perimeter is shown by concentrating attention on Kate ter Horst's house only, which historically contained relatively few of the wounded (about 200) compared to the larger numbers in the hotels.

The Deventer 'Hartenstein' was also used for the abortive resupply scenes. Initially, supply parachutes were dropped by the unit special effects team from high crane rigs and these close-up scenes were then cut into some actual supply drops, carried out first by a formation of four Dakotas of the Danish Air Force and then by a single Dakota over the Hartenstein. The latter was flown by the very experienced pilot John Hawke, who was able to drop single containers almost exactly where the cameramen wanted. Then, with smoke canisters streaming smoke from a wing, he simulated a crash, several times over,

Left and above: **Soldiers, either from the 2nd South Staffordshires or Glider Pilots, photographed by Sergeant Smith on September 17, 1944, on the Duitse Kampweg at Wolfheze (IWM).**

Left and above: **Men of C Company, the Border Regiment, dug in alongside the Van Lenneweg close by the Hartenstein, were photographed by Sergeant Smith on September 20 (IWM).**

disappearing from sight behind a tall beech tree in the direction of Deventer in a vast explosion of flame and smoke by courtesy of special effects.

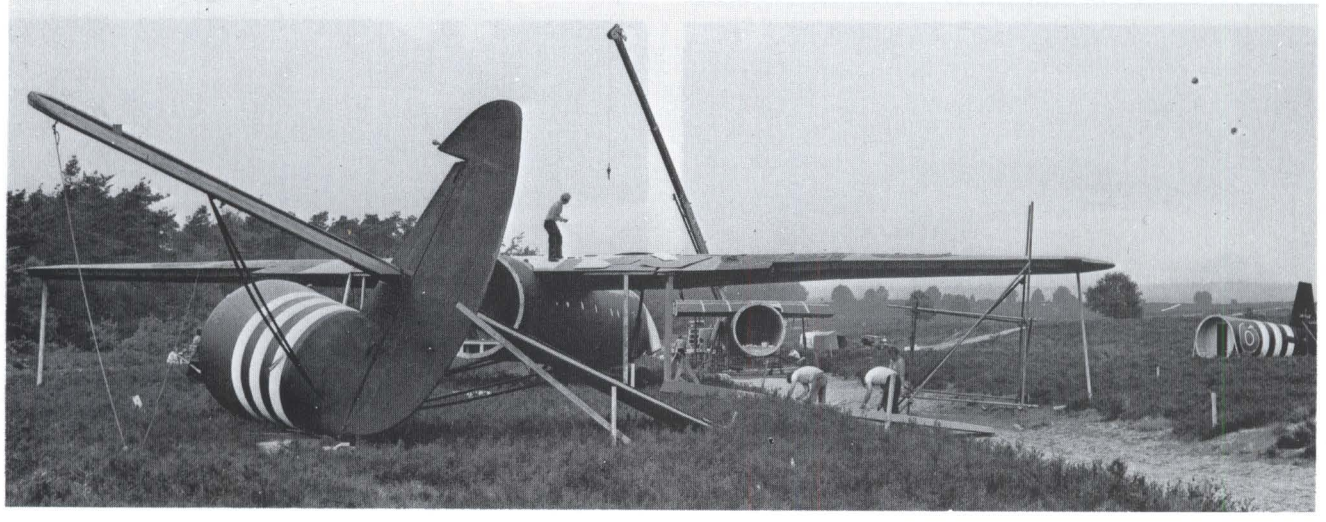
In a recreation park a few miles from Deventer a Dutch canal bridge was built over the narrow neck of a lake. This was then blown up in the face of Elliott Gould playing an American 101st Airborne Colonel, who then, in later scenes, 'over supervised' in dramatic fashion (but historically untrue) the building of a Bailey bridge by British engineers. This scene took several days and nights to film with the help of a RNA Engineer Squadron and instructors from their Engineers School; the bridge material came from the school with some from BAOR. Unfortunately, most of the Dutch conscripts refused to have their long hair cut, even with a 50 guilder bribe, so most of the work in the picture was done by their officers and NCOs and by the ubiquitous APA and the hard-core of extras. To ease the operation, both financially and in time, the bridge classification was lower than that required for the situation and it could not support a proper Sherman. However, when this scene appears in the film, as the leading elements of XXX Corps resume their advance in the half-gloom of dawn, it is really a column of plastic Shermans which rattle over the completed bridge.

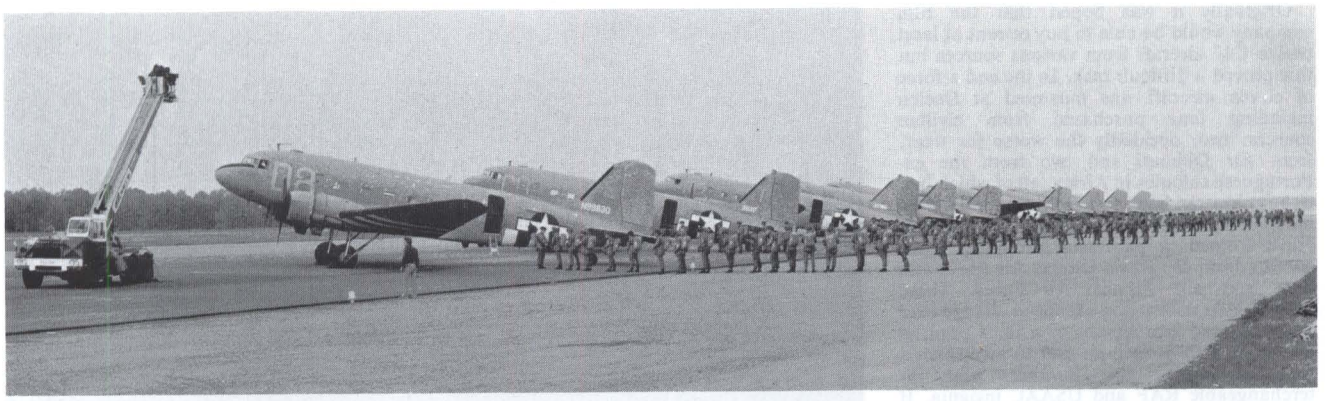
Another major battle area used was a small part of the Dutch tank ranges at Amersfoort some 50 kilometres west of Deventer. Most of these scenes were filmed by a second unit, which came over from England in July. The first scene involved the whole of the unit's armoured column — real and plastic Shermans, half-tracks, armoured cars, scout cars and, to give it weight, the Dutch Army provided Leopard and AMX tanks in the background. The initial break-out scenes were shot with an opening barrage of special effects explosions, with cuts to a still-surviving Dutch Army 25-pdr battery photographed in British livery on its artillery range to the north. The leading Irish Guards soon met heavy German opposition, which blocked the one highway axis until blasted out by RAF Typhoons played in the film by four Harvards suitably made up and dropping 'special effects' bombs made from fire extinguishers. Brigadier 'Joe' Vandeleur was present during these long, hot, dusty and dirty days watching Michael Caine acting his own part as CO of the Irish Guards.

The static scenes on the Dropping and Landing Zones were filmed on Ginkelsche Heide, near Ede, which was the wartime DZ of the 4th Parachute Brigade. On three of the hottest days of a hot summer, some 500 British Airborne troop extras and 200 unit members sweated on the dusty heathland, to film, first, the arrival at his DZ rendezvous of Lieutenant-Colonel John Frost. Then, a few days later, a corner of the glider LZ was filmed to show the unloading of the gliders and the airborne troops moving off, encouraged by 'lunatics' from a bombed-out asylum at Wolfheze. In a quickly set up Command Post nearby, Major-General Urquhart hears of the first mishaps which in the end brought disaster to his division — failure of the radios and the non-arrival of most of the jeep recce squadron.

Above: **This is as far as a real 30-ton Sherman could traverse the single-single Bailey built to simulate the Class 40 110ft bridge built by 14 Field Squadron, RE at Son in eleven hours on the night of September 18/19.** *Below:* **Michael Caine with the real 'Joe' Vandeleur.**

Replica Horsa gliders being erected on a corner of Ginkelsche Heide which represented the LZ of the first day.





Although it was originally intended to shoot the main parachuting scenes on the Ginkelsche Heide DZ, it soon became apparent that there would be snags to its use: first, a new autobahn ran along the approach end and its traffic could not be stopped and secondly, the DZ could be approached by many other roads and tracks thus making control of the crowds coming out to watch very difficult. The DZ is the one used each year for the memorial drop by 10 PARA(TAVR) which attracts up to 50,000 spectators.

It was planned that the first drop depicting the British landing would be filmed entirely from the air; thus it was important that nothing untoward on the ground would be visible. Therefore, with the help of Wing Commander Mike Jenkins, RAF, OC of the RAF team responsible for flight safety of the parachuting scenes, a similar DZ some 20 kilometres north on Speulde Heide was selected. This had few modern intrusions near it and was easier to police.

The parachute scenes were filmed in September, not necessarily to fit in with the actual dates of 1944 but to coincide with the only period during which the British parachute troops were available. The 1st Battalion, The Parachute Regiment, which had recently returned from Berlin, was due to fly to Cyprus for a tour with the UN Forces. Exercise New Market/Gulls Wing was drawn up and approved by the Ministry of Defence as a training exercise and 350 officers and men carried out aircraft familiarisation training on the Dakota at the Airborne Museum, Aldershot, before flying to Holland by charter aircraft. There they were accommodated in the RNAF barracks at Deelen airfield ready to carry out five descents for the film interspersed with their own training programme.

Prior to this, during the spring and summer, the RAF team had been studying the safety and technical aspects of converting civilian C47 aircraft and parachuting from them. This may seem a superfluous exercise, knowing the extent to which the C47 was and, indeed, is still used as a paratroop aircraft, but the Dakotas to be used were a mixed bag and, more importantly, the modern PX parachutes had not been cleared for use from this type of aircraft. Tests with dummies were carried out in UK on the first aircraft available and then RAF instructors made the first live descents. Initially, there were one or two incidents of canopies brushing the tailplane, but this problem was soon overcome.

Top and above: **Soldiers of the present day 1 Parachute Battalion show how it's done.**

Left: **Wing Commander Mike Jenkins, of HQ38 Group, leader of the RAF parachute Planning and Control Group for the film.** *Above:* **Two Dakotas at the beginning of the run-in over Speulde DZ.**

Originally it was hoped that the film company would be able to buy or rent at least twelve C47 aircraft from various sources but this proved a difficult task. In the end a force of eleven aircraft was mustered at Deelen including four purchased from civilian sources: two, decidedly the worse for wear, from Air Djibouti and two from the ex-Portuguese colonies in Africa, all of which had to be converted back to a military role. Of the other seven, all were military aircraft with crews trained in paratroop dropping, three coming from the Royal Danish Air Force and four from the Finnish Air Force. These needed little conversion except to change over the cable and strongpoint to a floor position for the British parachute and to give them a coat of paint, new numbers and interchangeable RAF and USAAC insignia. It was unfortunate that the colour scheme chosen by the art department was wrong, i.e. a desert brown instead of the olive drab of all US transport aircraft, but this was done to make the aircraft more visible against the dark background of the heath.

All the aircrew were quickly checked out in parachuting techniques by the RAF safety team and they then started on the more difficult task of flying in tight formations to simulate the formation used in 1944 a 'Vic of Vics' or a 9-ship element. This proved not feasible in the time available and the more prosaic but safer, 'Vics in line astern' was used with, on two occasions, a five aircraft Vic. Several aircraft were fitted with cameras in the astrodome, under the belly, on the port wing and in the cockpit by the aerial cameraman, Robin Browne, and some excellent close-up shots of the paratroopers jumping were obtained. Other cameras were mounted in a helicopter flying near the DZ and in a twin-engined Aztec flying behind or above the formations.

The main difficulty in the parachuting scenes and, indeed, in the flying sequences was to add body to the formations. Eleven Dakotas and, on some occasions, only nine due to unserviceability, had to be made to look like a hundred or more flying in the wide 1944 American formations. This was done optically after the main filming was completed, by the expert in this act of deception — Wally Veevers.

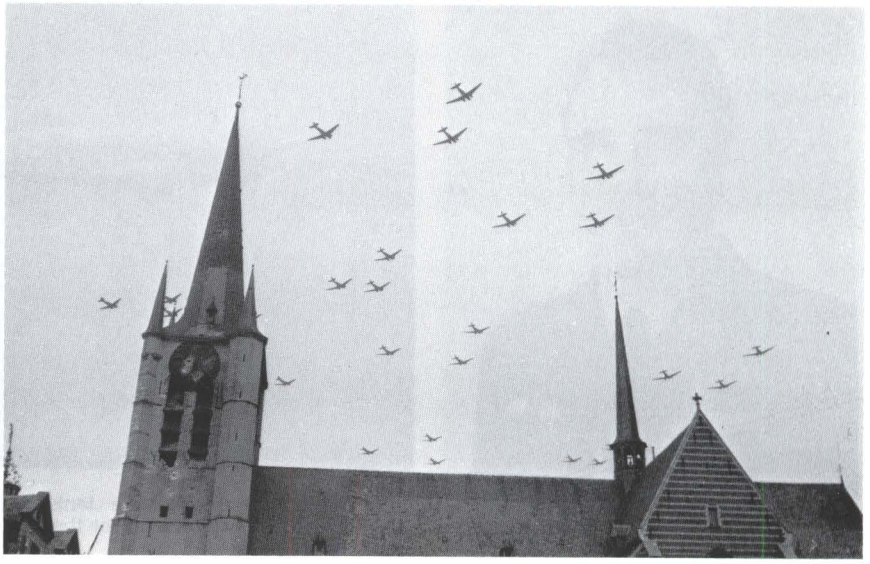
The Parachute Regiment contingent made one practice descent — their first from the Dakota — in separate Vic formations and these were filmed primarily as a preliminary exercise for the camera teams in the air and on the ground. The film was then rushed to the London studios by John Hawke in his Aztec accompanied by Richard Attenborough and the Director of Photography, Geoffrey Unsworth, who were able to view the rushes on the following morning in order to make any alterations to the filming arrangements and suggest possible improvements to the flying procedures.

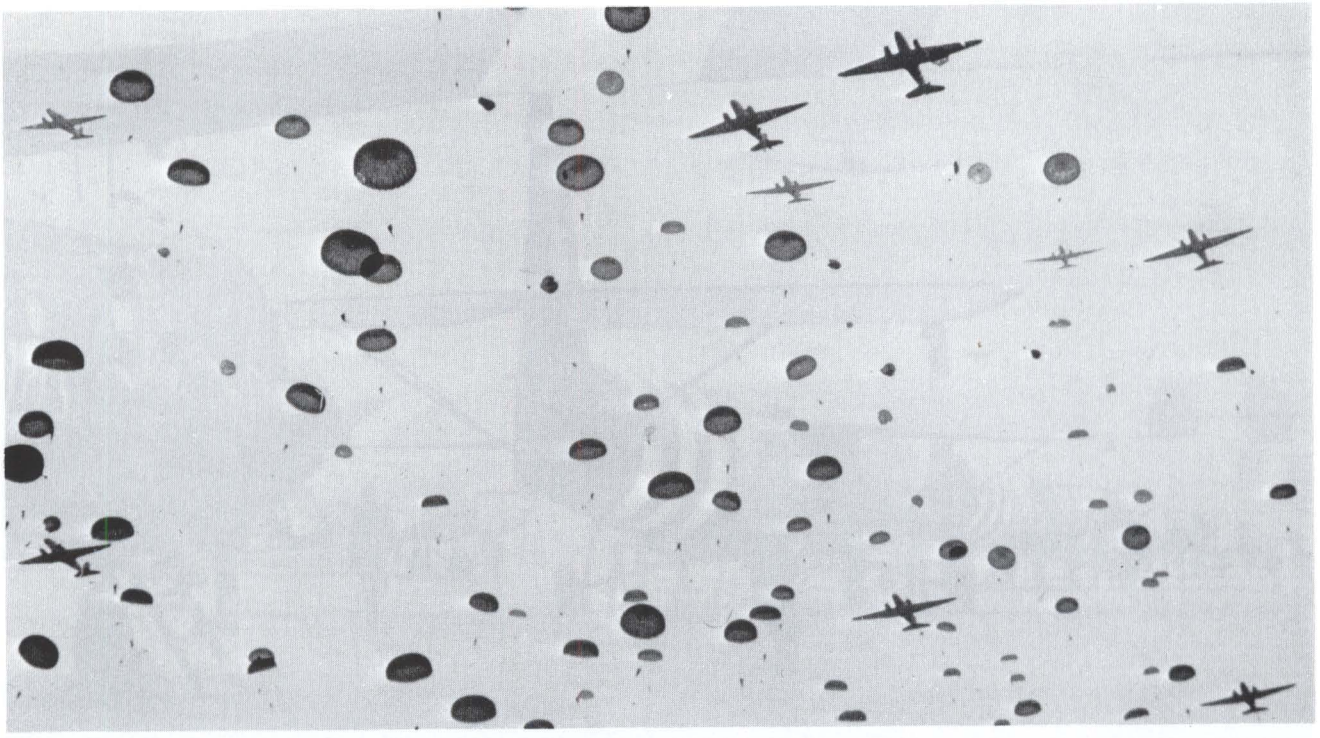
After a day's break involving numerous meetings and briefings, the main parachute sequences began and it was at this stage that the weather, which had blessed the unit's operations for five months, decided to turn sour at the most critical time. Although the weather was fine with little wind, which was good for the paratroopers, a misty haze under thin cloud made for poor visibility for the aircrew and bad light for the cameramen. The RAF meteorological detachment became the key in making the vital decision — when to jump? The Services side could be fairly flexible as the filming was combined with a ground training exercise, but the logistics of the film unit were more diverse as they involved bringing the various departments together and setting them up in their different

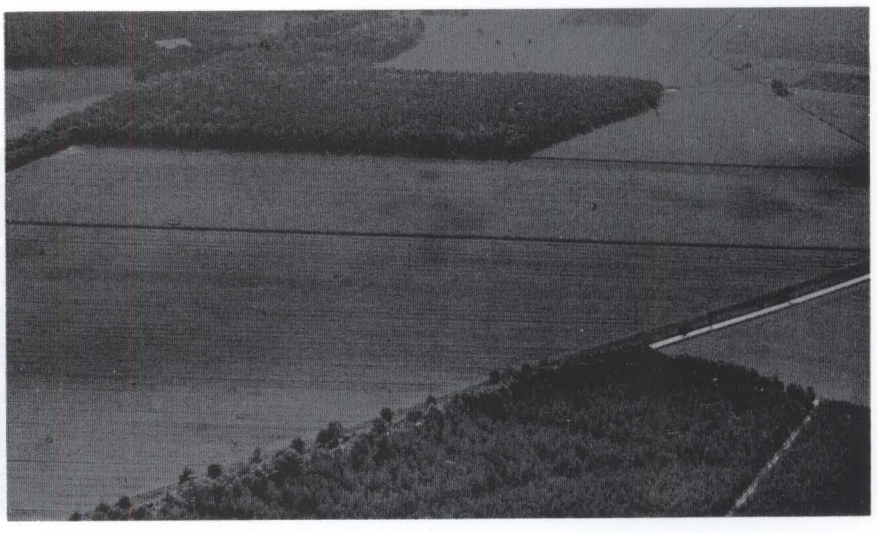
Right: **The real air armada, flying in 'Vic of Vics' formation (which could not be simulated in the film) photographed crossing Gheel in Belgium (IWM).**

Above: **Not content with a private army, this is producer Attenborough's Private Air Force! The eleven Dakotas on their dispersal area at Deelen Airfield, north of Arnhem.**

Above: **One of the eleven ground cameras set up and camouflaged on the dropping zone for the parachute scenes. This one was at the run-in end 400 yards off the flight line.**





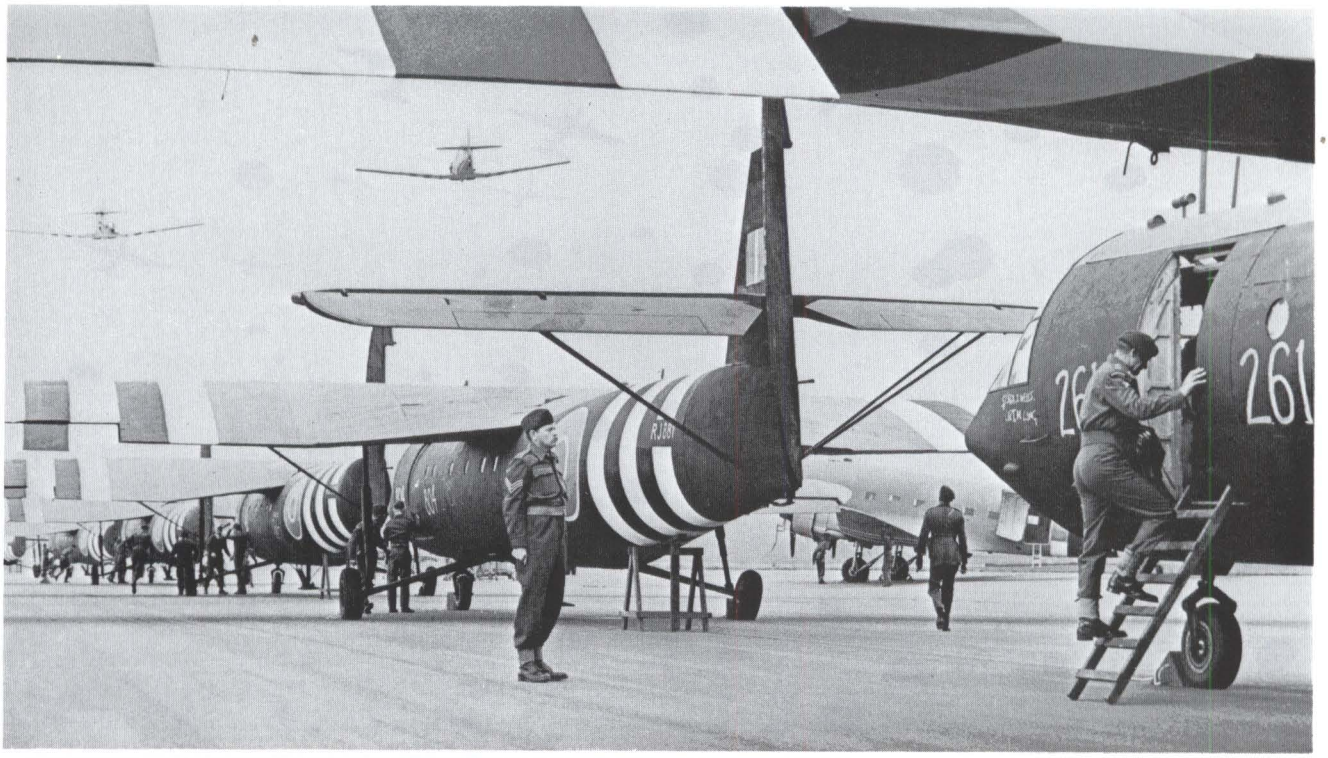


Above: **THE FILM. The parachute drop as seen from the ground.** *Right:* **DZ X at Jonkershoeve (looking south) on September 17, 1944 (IWM).** *Bottom:* **The same area, virtually unchanged, just west of Wolfheze.**

locations. The biggest problem was calling up the 500 or so extras to represent paratroopers who had already landed. As they came from far and wide, and had to report to the wardrobe department for kitting and arming six hours before the drop, at least a day's notice was required; furthermore, as their bill for the day would be around £50,000, including transport, pay and rations, the decision could not be taken lightly.

After a very hectic week, another four complete jumps in formation were carried out with fair success. Considering that the troops had only arrived ten days before, and the aircraft had been collected from various corners of the world, and that many of the aircrew were untrained in paratroop operations or tight formation flying, this was a remarkable achievement — the instant airborne Task Force. It was most fortunate too that there were only five major parachuting casualties all of whom happily recovered after spells in hospital. (Rather more painful for the soldier involved was the 85 days detention meted out by a court-martial to one eighteen-year-old who refused the order to jump at the last moment! Ed.)

Many old airborne men will no doubt notice that the parachutists did not jump with the 1944 equipment or weapons — kitbags, rifle/Bren, valises etc. — but, for safety reasons, this was not allowed with the PX parachute and modern weapons containers, with the SLR or Sterling, were used instead. On these actual drops, and on the ones filmed earlier for the British and American DZ scenes, some 400-500 extras were used to thicken up the scene on the ground. The extras were organized into sections of about fifteen each under an APA member as Commander and placed into position across the DZ with orders to move smartly towards the RVs marked by different coloured smoke. Initially, the men were sprinting past the cameras despite being told that they must act as if they were carrying a 90lb load but, as the long, hot day wore on, their dash and enthusiasm were suitably reduced.



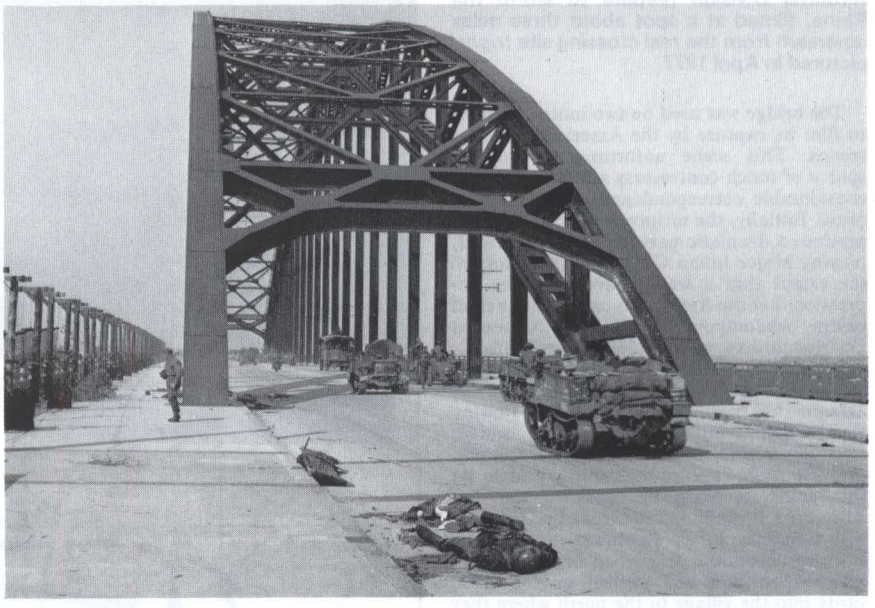
The Royal Netherlands Air Force base at Deelen, seven kilometres north of Arnhem, was the location for a number of scenes. In 1944, this was a heavily-defended German airfield and it was planned that the British airborne troops would capture it to allow the landing of the 52nd Lowland Division and further supplies for the Airborne Corps. Deelen is now a RNAF helicopter base and the runways and taxi-tracks are not, of course, used. The unit set up a tented base in one corner where the gliders were re-assembled for the emplaning and take-off scenes in UK after they had first been used for the landing scenes! In August, the Unit Air Force started to assemble — the eleven Dakotas together with the four Harvards and an Auster. Various emplaning scenes were filmed depicting glider loading of British and American troops and endless taxi-ing and take-off shots were taken which, by imaginative cutting, give the appearance of masses of aircraft on the airfield. It also appears that the gliders take off and are in flight behind their tugs but this is all trickery as no flyable gliders were made.

Harvards with painted-out rear cockpits done up to vaguely look like Typhoons.

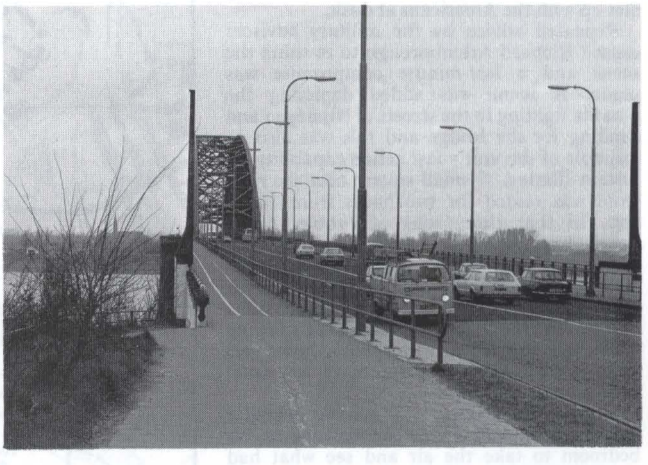
Above: **The realistic scene at Deelen aerodrome which doubled as an English airfield.**
Below: **Neil Williams, renowned British aerobatic and display pilot, flies Spitfire F.IX (MH434) G-ASJV on a simulated photographic reconnaissance sortie north of Arnhem. The boy on the bicycle is played by Eric van't Wout.**

Above: **THE FILM. Leopard/Panthers cross Nijmegen bridge to reinforce the city.** *Right:* **1944. Sergeant Midgley's picture of the bridge on September 21 — a dead German lies in the gutter (IWM).**

Another major battleground for the unit was Nijmegen bridge and the river Waal. Although this bridge, one of the biggest in Europe, is an important traffic point, all road and river traffic was stopped for short periods on a number of Sunday mornings starting at an early hour. The first scene was the one depicting the German reinforcement of Nijmegen from the north which involved all the unit's German vehicles and eight Dutch Army AMX SP guns, with 400 extras. This involved a military style movement plan (devised by myself), to get the force from Deventer into starting positions near the bridge at first light. One hour only was allowed but in this time it was possible to move the column three times over the bridge and around a traffic circuit at either end. Unknowing tourists driving across the bridge in the intervals between takes were astounded to pass massed 'German' armour and troops lining the roadway.



As it was in 1944. The Guards Armoured Division streams northwards past a shot-up Wehrmacht bus.



A modern German vehicle gets shot near the same spot in April 1977 — but only on film.

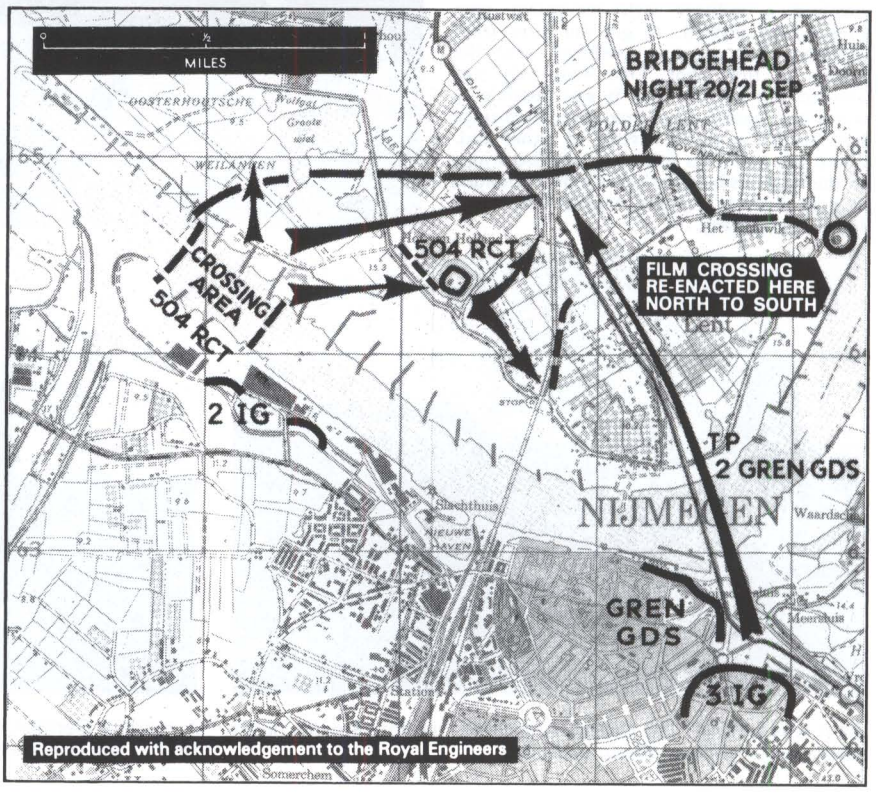
Above: **THE FILM. GIs of the 504 RCT of Brigadier-General James Gavin's 82nd Airborne Division prepare to storm the Rhine, filmed at a spot about three miles upstream from the real crossing site** *(right)* **pictured in April 1977.**

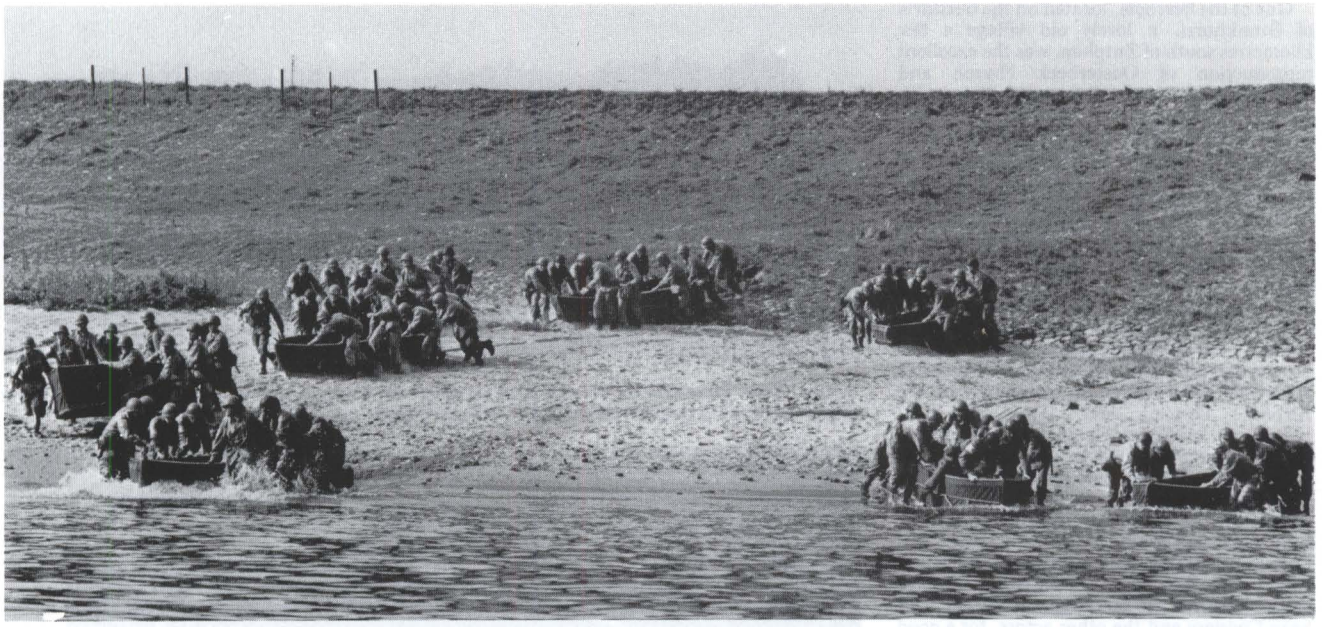
The bridge was used on two more occasions to film its capture by the American airborne troops. This scene unfortunately was the source of much controversy and has attracted considerable correspondence in the national press. Initially, the scriptwriter, in an effort to produce a dramatic part for Robert Redford, playing Major Julian Cook, altered history to the extent that it would have given the impression that the Americans captured the road bridge whereupon the Guards Armoured Division tanks were waved across by Redford.

In reality, the 504 RCT of the 82nd Airborne Division made one of the wars bravest assaults by crossing the wide, fast flowing Waal River a mile west of the rail bridge, storming ashore to capture a Dutch fort and pressing on to capture the railway bridge. At this point, a troop of tanks of the 2nd Armoured Battalion, the Grenadier Guards, with Sergeant P. T. Robinson in the lead, stormed across the huge road bridge against heavy opposition and pushed on for 1,500 yards into the village to the north where they met up with the Americans at dusk.

Repeated advice by the military advisors caused Richard Attenborough to re-think the scene and a last-minute compromise was made. A scene was added depicting the Guards fighting in the streets of Nijmegen and heading for the bridge and this was also an example of the unit's fast action capability for instant filming. A small square near the river front was rented for two hours from dawn, and, in that time, tons of rubble, house debris, burning trucks, bent guns and broken bodies were strewn across the area and some 100 British and German troops plus four Sherman tanks battled across it and on to the bridge. On the last 'Cut!' the hard-working props team moved in with lorries, hoses and brooms to restore the square to its usual Sunday morning calm.

During the action, a Dutch householder came sleepily out on to the balcony of his bedroom to take the air and see what had disturbed his sleep. He looked down into his front garden to see two gory German bodies slumped over a machine gun whereupon he





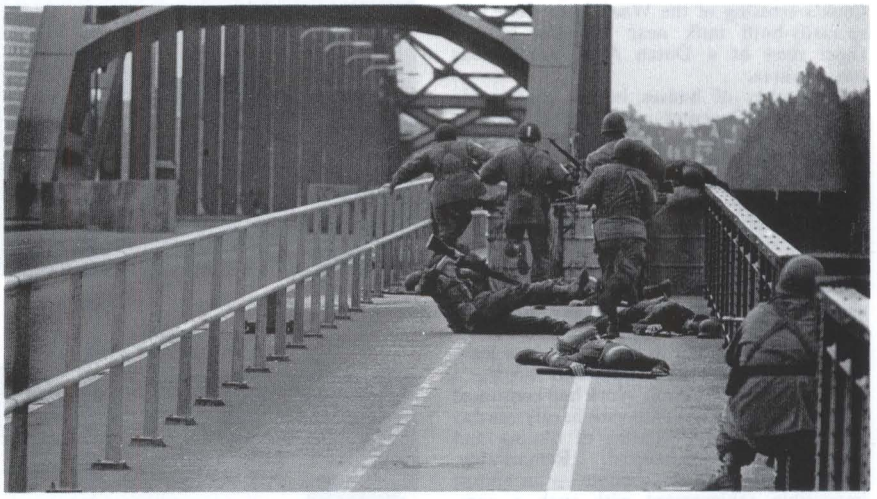
THE FILM. The assault craft, powered by outboard motors, enter the Rhine.

turned sharply back, slammed the doors tight and firmly pulled down the blinds to shut out the nightmare!

(Sir Richard Attenborough explained to the editor, at the Press preview of the film, that the actions of capturing the Nijmegen road and rail bridges were both amalgamated. Also the scene which had been filmed of Robert Redford waving the British tanks across, which had caused all the uproar, does not even appear in the final version of the film! He felt that the advance Press criticism of the Redford episode was unfair, especially as the picture was not even finished at the time and when no one had seen the completed film.)

The scene of Cook's crossing was filmed two miles upstream from the road bridge, instead of one mile downstream of the rail bridge and in the wrong direction, i.e. north to south. This was necessary, it was stated, to obtain two suitable filming locations, one for the assembly and launching area and the other for the landing beach on the far side; perhaps only a few experts will notice the current is flowing the wrong way!

In 1944, this actual crossing was a most gallant assault in which over half the leading battalion were lost to enemy fire and drowning. Only 32 canvas assault boats were available with limited numbers of paddles to cross the 400 yards of river flowing at five knots swept by enemy fire. In 1976, with a bunch of actors, extras and stuntmen, this was also quite a feat although the assault boats were neatly fitted with an outboard



THE FILM. Robert Redford, (with white striped helmet), as Major Julian Cook, leads the attack on the northern approach to the bridge.

engine in the centre to add power to the rifle butts and paddles. Miraculously, several crossings were made and even more simulated launchings and landings without any mishaps. The never-ending flow of river traffic had to be halted for various periods of time — a far more difficult operation than stopping vehicles on a road. The unit location was centred on a hospitable cafe, which did a roaring trade in cold drinks during the long hours of waiting and hot, strong drinks to dry out the damp participants.

Left and above: **1944. Real 82nd Airborne troops pass the grave of an American soldier in the verge of St. Canisius Singel as they approach Nijmegen bridge from the south (US Army).**

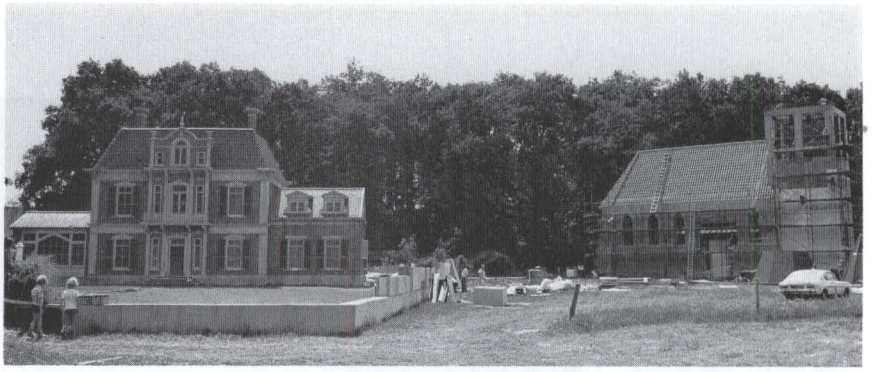
One of the best sets, located on the outskirts of Bronkhorst, a lovely old village a few kilometres south of Zutphen, was the excellent reproduction of Oosterbeek church and churchyard and a small country house with garden simulating that of Kate ter Horst. Kate ter Horst, still living in her old rectory at Oosterbeek, came to visit the filming and to offer advice. Her husband related how, after the battle, he had returned and with the help of two friends buried the bodies of 64 airborne soldiers in their garden who had died of wounds in the house during its use as an aid post.

A now-bypassed loop of the IJssel river was a convenient location for two river crossing scenes — the abortive effort by Major-General Sosabowski and some of his Polish Brigade to cross the Rhine to come to the aid of the Airborne Division and, later, the final evacuation of Major-General Urquhart and the remnants of his Division. Three very damp nights were spent on these scenes, particularly the latter one, because heavy rain had to be simulated. Rain-making machines and the local fire brigade saw to it that everyone was kept in a suitably sodden condition all night and, before each take, the Assistant Director called together the 500 extras, together with Sean Connery and the other actors, for a good hose down!

Close-ups of the Polish crossing and also of Cook's crossing of the Waal, were done in a specially-built tank near Deventer on the IJssel river at a Dutch Army amphibious training area.

A number of houses in the countryside surrounding Deventer were used as HQs or medical dressing stations for the different armies. They were indeed brave owners who allowed a film unit to invade their property and, in the space of a few hours, festoon it with cables, lights, cameras, vehicles, caravans and tents. The owners, however, seemed most friendly and hospitable and an efficient props team moved in afterwards to clear up the mess and to make good any damage to house or garden.

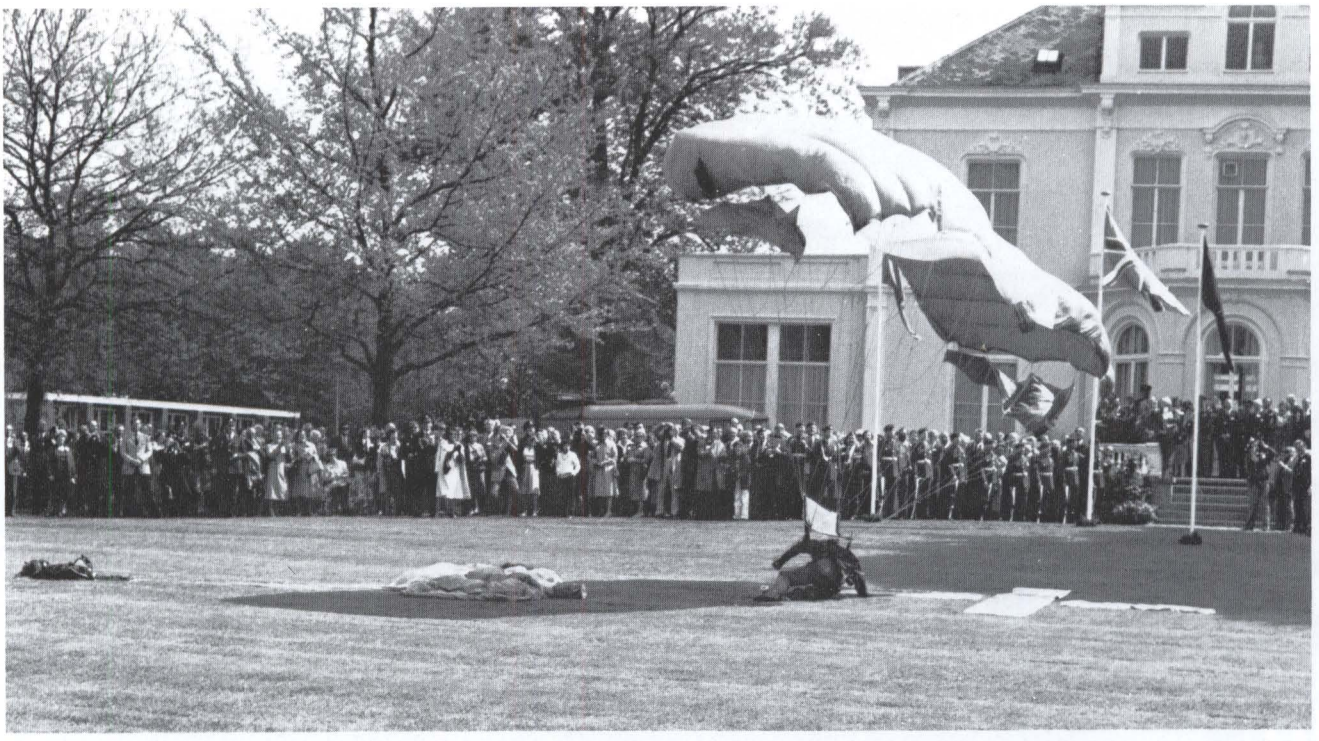
The unit was able to have four days leave over the August bank holiday and this was a badly needed rest for all. Work had continued at the same cracking pace with hardly one day off during the 4½ months of filming and everyone was exhausted. Remarkably, production was up to schedule — an almost impossible achievement with such a complicated and full programme. It was made possible by Sir Richard Attenborough's own personal leadership, the excellent hard working team spirit of the unit crews and, the marvellous weather during the summer of 1976.



Above: **The 'Oosterbeek church and rectory' set being constructed outside Bronkhorst village only to be destroyed by the Art Department** *(below).*

Above: **The water tank — note the outboard engines for wave-making on the right.**

Below: **1944. Photo by Sergeant Gee of XXX Corps crossing Grave bridge over the Maas, captured intact by the 82nd Airborne Division (IWM).** *Below right:* **THE FILM. The same bridge with Charlie Mann's Bedford QL and Fordson WOT 6.**



The opening ceremony is topped by a parachute landing on the front lawn of the Hartenstein in 1978.

THE HARTENSTEIN MUSEUM

The Hartenstein Airborne Museum was founded in 1949 when a number of private collections of relics of the Battle of Arnhem were brought together and exhibited in Doorwerth Castle, on the bank of the Rhine in the village of Renkum. Mainly comprising donations by the local population and gifts from men who had taken part in the fighting, the collection grew steadily. So, in fact, did the reputation of the museum which, over the years, earned itself international fame as a source of information about the battle.

In 1977 the hotel which had been housed in 'Hartenstein' closed. This was the country house where, in 1944, the 1st Airborne Division had its headquarters and which was the focal point of the perimeter defended during the last phase of the fighting. There were a number of good reasons for moving the museum there. First, the collection had begun to outgrow the space available in the castle and also the new location would be more accessible to its visitors, but naturally the main consideration was the authenticity of the house in view of the role it played during the battle.

The museum opened in Hartenstein in 1978, the opening ceremony being performed by Major-General R. E. Urquhart, CB, DSO, who commanded the division at Arnhem. Since then the museum has received hundreds of thousands of visitors from all over the world, one hundred thousand of them in 1984 alone when the 40th anniversary of the battle was commemorated.

As Colonel C. C. Wilhelm, RNAF (Retd.), the Museum Director, explains, 'The Hartenstein continues to be a great attraction for all those people whose interest was caught by the legendary battle being remembered there, but first of all it serves as a shrine to the courage and tenacity the men of the 1st Airborne Division displayed during their unequal fight.'

General Sir John Hackett and Major-General R. E Urquhart in front of the command post diorama re-created in the cellars of the former Hotel Hartenstein during the 40th Anniversary celebrations on September 21, 1984.

Major-General R. E. Urquhart, CB, DSO, raises the Airborne colours on the front lawn of the Hartenstein (UMA).